



The Tree Shrinker

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A MONTHLY BULLETIN

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East Bay Bonsai Society

January Meeting: January 8, 2014 @ 7:30 p.m.

President's Note

Happy New Year East Bay Members and Friends. What a festive holiday party we had! Special kudos goes to President John and wife Karen Nackley for the perfectly prepared ham and turkey with gravy main dishes and accompaniment of bubbly champagne and drinks. Members added delicious varieties of hors d'oeuvres, side dishes and desserts. All this was topped off with an entertaining video produced by Michael Hylton, which with humor and skill, highlighted 2013 EBBS activities. Within 3 hours from set-up to clean-up, December 2013's EBBS Holiday Party was one of the very best! How does such a miraculous event happen?

It happens with the goodwill and individual effort of each member—PARTICIPATION! I am hoping each member will continue to take full advantage of the educational opportunities at monthly club meetings, workshops and fieldtrips. Support these educational benefits by sharing time, item(s) and donations to the fundraisers – July Auction, October Show sales and raffles at meetings.

I became a Bonsai Enthusiast about 14 years ago. I now realize that I am on a pathway of life-long learning and association with enjoyable, caring and sharing individuals of all ages, backgrounds and experiences. This can't be a better a path for me. That's why I participate.

The make-up of your elected 2014 EBBS Board of Directors is packed with talent, experience and individual strengths. With their leadership and commitment and your participation, I expect we will all strengthen our knowledge in the art and growing of bonsai and share goodwill and friendship along the way.

Linda

January Meeting

The January meeting will be a demonstration about how to pot (and repot) your bonsai by Gordon Deeg. Gordon will repot a tree furnished by Linda Soliven and will show us step by step what needs to be done. The process of repotting our bonsai sometimes does not get the careful attention that it should to the detriment of the

tree. Properly placing the tree in the pot, the choice of soil, and securing the tree in the pot are all necessary for the good health of the tree, and are as important as choosing the proper time to repot.

This presentation is of particular interest to the newer members of the club, but there is always something for all of us to learn. Many of us know Gordon as the recent director of the bonsai garden. He has given many demonstrations aimed at beginners and all have been well received.

Special thanks in advance to Roger Brady, Ryan Vega and Bev Martinez for offering to bring refreshments to the meeting.

Holiday Potluck

Our holiday party was a great success and was enjoyed by all who attended. The food brought by attendees was extraordinary. EBBS is fortunate to have many fine cooks and they all outdid themselves for this year's repast. There were offerings for every taste and waistline. Thanks to all who contributed food to the dinner. Your efforts added greatly to the festivities.



Entertainment was furnished by Michael Hylton who edited and produced a slide show of the past years activities of the club. In case anyone was worried about the content of the show, Michael introduced the show by a statement that the show was approved for all

audiences and he concluded the presentation with a statement that no bonsai was harmed by the show. Thanks Michael for your efforts. The show was the highpoint of the evening.

During the event, our new Board for 2014 was announced and approved:

President – Linda Soliven
Vice President – Michael Hylton
Treasurer – Pat Cahill
Secretary – Janice Dilbeck
Past President – John Nackley
Board member – Roger Brady
Board member - Tom Colby
Board member – Bob Gould
Board member – Inge Woelfel

February Meeting

The February meeting will feature a presentation by John Thompson on the care and feeding of oaks. John has long been known as an expert on oaks and we are privileged to see him styling an oak tree. John typically shares in his presentations his extensive knowledge about how oaks grow, how they should be styled and what we should do to maintain them in robust good health.

John Nackley

A tradition in EBBS is to present the outgoing president at the end of his term of office with a gift as a token of appreciation for his hard work for the club. At the holiday dinner, John Nackley received a richly deserved gift, a very nice bonsai stand.

Much of what John did throughout the year was behind the scenes. Particularly noteworthy was John pushing the club to take advantage of a GSBF grant to bring in a speaker that the club otherwise might not be able to afford. The result was the meeting last spring presided over by Michael Hagedorn.

Did you enjoy the ham and the turkey at the dinner? How about the champagne? These parts of the dinner were arranged by John and are examples of the many little things out of public view that John has done for the club.

John has set a very high standard for the rest of us and the club very much appreciates all he has done. Fortunately he will still be on the board as past president to share his expertise.

The club is also fortunate to have Linda Soliven as president for the coming year. We can look forward to a busy and rewarding year under her leadership.

Dear Editor

I wish to express my gratitude to the membership and the board of EBBS for the wonderful stand given to me at the club's December holiday party. It is a perfect fit for several of my trees and a size that I did not have.

The tour as president of East Bay's Board has been good for my growth in bonsai in many ways. The friendships that I have developed with board members has been especially rewarding as they shared their

wealth of bonsai experience, teaching me more than running the club. The benefits I have gotten from participating are greater than any effort given. I hope my experience will stimulate more members to join in this responsibility for club direction.

Sincerely,
John Nackley

Workshops

Creating fine bonsai is very much a hands-on art. Demonstrations are helpful, but a great deal of the information you really need to style and to maintain your bonsai comes only from workshops where you work on your own trees under skilled guidance. It is a place to put theory into practice. Splendid workshops are held most months at Merritt College. See the article about these workshops in this newsletter.

So if you are new to bonsai, how should you approach a workshop? The simplest way is to bring your tree to the workshop and hear the suggestions and comments from the instructor for work that needs to be done now, and future care of the tree. The visit will get you started, but the real learning at a workshop comes when you actually work on your tree under the guidance of the instructor. This usually involves cutting branches and wiring what is left to create a tree that is on its way to becoming a fine bonsai.

You should bring a tool kit to the workshop which will allow you to do this. Most people who have been in bonsai for a while have accumulated a suitcase full of tools, many of which are for specialized uses and are only occasionally used. All of which is nice, particularly if you have deep pockets, but let's look at the barest minimum of tools that you really need.

An essential tool is a pair of bonsai scissors for trimming small branches. Bonsai scissors have pointed blades which make the trimming easier in dense foliage.

A second essential tool is a pair of wire cutters. Those designed for bonsai have blunt ends which allow cutting wire close to branches, but cheap hardware store wire cutters can get the job done, although not always gracefully.

Pliers are helpful in applying wire as well as removing wire, but again, hardware tools will work nearly as well as expensive pliers designed for bonsai.

The last and probably least critical item in your minimalist tool kit is diagonal cutters designed for bonsai. These will allow you to trim larger branches than your scissors will comfortably handle, and to cut branches close to the trunk of your tree. You will find that these are very useful, and you will want to add them to your minimalist tool kit early in your career as a bonsai artist.

Tools expressly for bonsai can range from moderately expensive to outrageously expensive. You will find that the least expensive tools will work nearly as well as the high end tools. If you are just starting out, these are the tools that you should buy. When you become an accomplished bonsai artist you can always replace them with pricier models which have some

advantages such as staying sharp longer and being shaped to make the work a bit easier. Hida Tool at 1333 San Pablo Ave, Berkeley is a source of inexpensive bonsai tools.

Since the tree will probably require wiring, you need a supply of wire. Copper wire is available in sizes in even numbers ranging from number 2 (very thick) through number 24 (very fine). Again, most people who have been in bonsai for a while bring a supply of most of the available sizes of wire to a workshop. So what is the bare minimum? A roll of size 16 copper wire and a roll of number 12 will take you a long way. If you need a little stiffer wire than, say number 12, you can apply two strands of number 12 to the branch. By doubling up wires on branches you can pretty well cover the needs of most trees with just two sizes of wire. Later on you can fill out your stock of wire with a range of sizes. Jim Gremel who is a vender at many local shows is the go-to source for wire.

Now that you have your tools and wire in hand, the next thing is to understand what should be accomplished in the workshop. It might surprise you that the ultimate goal of the workshop experience is to give you enough knowledge about bonsai so that you can style and maintain bonsai on your own without help. The fact that you emerge from the workshop with a tree that is a little snazzier than when it came is really only a minor fringe benefit. The action is what you learned in the workshop that you can apply in the future to other trees as well as the tree that you brought.

So where do you start? You should look at your tree and decide what you want to accomplish in the workshop. Is it, for example, how to deal with an awkward branch? Are you unsure where is the best front for the tree? Should the long branches be cut back? The instructor may tell you that the branch that you thought was awkward is really OK, and it is another branch that needs help. If this happens, you must realize that the time that you spent looking at your tree is not lost. Having critically examined your tree allows you to better understand what the instructor is telling you even if the problem with the tree is not quite what you thought it was.

During the workshop, when the instructor is telling you to do something, ask if you are not absolutely clear about what is to be done and how it is to be done. The more you ask, the more you will learn. Don't be shy about quietly watching what the instructor is saying and doing with other trees in the workshop. That, too, is a great opportunity to learn about other trees than yours.

The workshop is only a brief moment of time in the life of the tree that you brought. Once the workshop is over, the tree is in your hands. Be sure to ask the instructor about what you need to do for the future care of the tree and how you should do it. When should wire be removed? When should the tree be repotted? If extensive work was done on the tree, what is the immediate care required to help the tree recover? Be sure that you are absolutely clear on these questions as well as others that you might have.

Most instructors welcome repeat visits so that they can see the progress of the tree and can make recommendations about what to do next to speed the tree on its way to becoming a masterpiece. A note worth considering is that bonsai is not an exact science. Two highly qualified bonsai artists may have very different visions of the future of the same tree. Schlepping your tree to many workshops with many different instructors can lead not only to the tree being confused but also you, too, being confused about the future of the tree. A second opinion about your tree from another instructor is all right, but more than that can probably do more harm than good.

So what is the bottom line of all of this? It is simply that bonsai is a hands-on art and workshops are the best and in some ways, the only way to learn about bonsai. Nothing beats learning by working on your own tree under the guidance of qualified instructor. Also nothing beats the warm fuzzy feeling that comes when you bring the tree back to the instructor and say that you thought that moving a branch from here to there improved the tree, and the instructor agrees that was a good move. It means that you have made a big step on the way to becoming a bonsai artist.

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 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

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 tree 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. 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

- Watering – Reduce watering, but ensure plants receive sufficient water
- Fertilizing – Feed with 0-10-10
- Repotting – Plan for repotting, replenishing supplies of potting mixes; late January begin repotting early budding deciduous trees

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.

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)

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.

East Bay Bonsai Society—Schedule for 2014
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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**

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
July	9	Auction
July	27	BGLM Introduction to Bonsai – Tom Colby
Aug		Picnic
Aug	24	BGLM Introduction to Bonsai – Bob Gould
Sept	10	Show Prep
Sept	28	BGLM Introduction to Bonsai – Dennis Hawkins
Oct		No club meeting due to proximity to show
Oct	26	BGLM Introduction to Bonsai – J D Lin
Nov	12	Juniper Jubilee
Nov	23	BGLM Introduction to Bonsai – John Nackley
Dec	10	Holiday Dinner
