



The Tree Shrinker

Volume XXXXII, No. 3

A MONTHLY BULLETIN

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East Bay Bonsai Society

March Meeting:

March 12, 2014 @ 7:30 p.m.

President's Note

As members of EBBS, you and I are part of a club whose primary goal is to meet the needs of all its members. As each member participates in one's capacity of service to club functions, each reaps the benefits of learning and enjoying the growing of bonsai. There are so many ways to provide club service. A few examples: sign up for a monthly meeting task, contribute an item to the monthly drawing, begin gathering now, item(s) for the July Auction event, plan now to exhibit at least one tree and help put on our crowning event in the October EBBS Show.

It was such a pleasure to witness all the items brought to our last meeting for Show/Tell/Engage. Please remember, this activity is for sharing and collaborating on trees in all development stages. For our March meeting, Bill Castellon will be sharing his expertise on Pines. To add to the instruction and further our understanding, Bill hopes to view and discuss members' Pines within his presentation. Do bring your Pines in development as well as Pine masterpieces to share in addition to other items.

In February, the Board of Directors gave a nod of approval to the Member Services Proposal for 2014-2016. The Board views this 4 point proposal as having exciting potential in continuing to energize and sustain vibrant EBBS going into the future:

1. The BOD welcomed Roger Brady, your newest elected Board member. Roger and Michael Hylton initiated this proposal to facilitate membership engagements that can be valuable to new and existing members alike. Roger will focus his service on the Board in this direction.
2. In an effort to tap the enthusiasm and institutional memory of established members, willing and interested will be identified and encouraged to actively support a new member (or prospect) for example: check in with that person, invite him/her to events in the bonsai world, direct and introduce him/her to the Club's resources, etc. when his/her needs dictate. It may not be realized, but there are

already old/new member mentoring alliances that have voluntarily happened with some members along this line.

3. To expand the valuable resources such as the EBBS Calendar, newsletter, *EastBayBonsai.org* website and the Club Library, plans to link members to Internet bonsai sites, articles, videos, and vendors etc. are in the works.
4. The last point of the proposal is in the conceptual state. The value of this concept is in creating an in-Club database to match members willing to serve as coaches with club learners seeking this level of engagement. You have heard the adage...to teach is to learn. This element in our club's culture could be an experience of joy in itself. The stage of the proposal requires identifying both those experienced members willing to share their specified interest, knowledge and expertise with those members whose needs may vary as to interests, developed skill levels and commitment. I strongly urge each member to share your thoughts, questions and comments with any/all Board members and especially Roger Brady and Michael Hylton. Your input will greatly assist further development of this concept as to its viability and possibility.

Linda

March Meeting

The March meeting will feature a presentation on pines by Bill Castellon who has long held an interest in pines and grows them superbly. He is an expert on the care and styling of pines and has made many fine presentations to the club in the past. Bill is a member of EBBS and is one of the artists presiding at the monthly workshops at Merritt College.

Pines are not difficult to grow but require somewhat different treatment from many of the other trees that we grow as bonsai. Pines require work through the year and especially in the spring time, so Bill's presentation will

come at a critical time for the care of your pine bonsai. The club is fortunate to have Bill as a speaker.



Thanks in advance to the Nackleys and the Goulds for bringing refreshments to the meeting. Only two people signed up for refreshments and we usually have three volunteers. If you haven't contributed refreshments lately, perhaps you would like to make an addition to the refreshment table.

April Meeting

The April meeting will feature a presentation on Oaks by John Thompson. He was originally scheduled for the February meeting but graciously switched meeting nights with Jay MacDonald because February was a better time for a presentation on flowering bonsai. John has long been known as an expert on Oaks and we are privileged to see him styling an Oak tree. He typically shares his extensive knowledge about how to grow Oaks to perfection as well as how they grow in nature. This is important because knowing the growth patterns of a tree in nature helps to guide us in styling our trees. John has presented programs to EBBS in the past and they have always been well received.

February Meeting

The February meeting was yet another edition of the Jay MacDonald wow and dazzle show. Jay is an extremely enthusiastic speaker and his enthusiasm for bonsai is infectious. He opened the program with a brief biography. He started bonsai in 1997 and has since studied with several noted teachers, especially with Kathy Shaner. His passion for bonsai was immediate and has only increased with time. Deciduous trees that

both flower and fruit have particularly attracted his attention.

The principal requirement for bountiful flowering and fruiting of these trees is very heavy fertilization. He recommends feeding with Miracle Grow (readily available at garden centers and big box stores) every 14 to 18 days and that the fertilizer be diluted as directed on the package. He has had less success with organic fertilizers such as fish emulsion on his deciduous trees, and he speculates that these fertilizers do not have the high phosphorous levels that Miracle Grow has. He commented that it is the heavy fertilization that produces fine bonsai rather than "mall-sai", a term that he used to describe the "bonsai" sold by gift shops in malls.

Deciduous trees are wired with aluminum wire in the spring and the wire is usually removed in the early summer. The reason for the quick on and off of the wire is that heavily fertilized trees grow rapidly and since the wire does not stretch, the branches can quickly develop wire scars. Once wired scarred, the trees do not heal themselves and the tree loses a great deal of its beauty.

The best characteristics of a fine deciduous tree are a stout trunk, a pleasing shape and, most importantly, a well developed twig structure. Pruning long branches forces latent buds close to the trunk to develop into new branches. Also, Jay recommends that the tree be defoliated in late spring when the new leaves have hardened. This involves cutting all the new leaves off, leaving only the stem of each leaf. This operation allows the sun to reach the interior of the tree which encourages the sprouting of latent buds. The tree can survive this operation if it is growing well due to heavy fertilization. Otherwise, defoliation could be a serious setback for the tree.



Jay brought in several of his own trees to show just how spectacular deciduous trees can be. These trees turned the meeting into a minishow. All were beautifully grown and were shown top dressed and on a stand, totally ready for a show.

The demonstration tree was an apple tree in full bloom. Jay cut two large branches, reducing the tree to less than one half of the original size. This produced

gasps from the audience to see the greater part of the flowering branches removed. The result was a tree that was more in proportion with the trunk. Jay said that with the removal of the large branches, the energy of the tree would be focused into producing lots of little branches and the tree would develop the wonderful twig structure. Jay then carved some dead wood from the trunk as well as reduced the stubs from the branch removal. The demonstration was an example of how bold but careful thinking in pruning a tree can produce splendid results.



The show and tell portion of the evening produced several trees as well as pots made by one of our members. In the past, the show and tell table has featured more or less finished bonsai for our admiration. More recently, trees have been brought in where the owner has a question for the audience about culture or styling. This trend is a very welcome addition to the show and tell table and is an opportunity for us all to increase our knowledge of bonsai. Jay MacDonald, our speaker, was generous on giving his advice about several of the trees. If you have a question about one of your trees, by all means, bring it to the show and tell table at the next meeting. Help is available. All you need to do is to bring your tree.

A Matter of Respect

About the time of World War II, most residential gardening in California was in the hands of Japanese gardeners who are now a thing of the past, having been largely replaced by mow and blow guys. These gardeners were the founders of some of the first bonsai clubs in California. Many of these early bonsai clubs catered solely to the Japanese, although they have since turned into the bonsai clubs of today which are open to everybody. The local Yamato Bonsai Kai is an example of one of these clubs.

The change in membership has brought mixed blessings. For one thing, the meetings are conducted in English language rather than Japanese, a distinct advantage for most of us. On the other hand, a feature of these first bonsai clubs that has sadly been lost is the

very Japanese idea that as a matter of respect you should make it a high priority to visit other clubs when they have a show, and, incidentally, contribute generously to the donation jar. The Japanese view is that if you want other people to visit your show, you must show respect to them by visiting their show. Now we tend to either ignore other club shows, or we visit them to shop from the vendors or to chat with friends.

Take a moment and think about why you display a tree in a show. There are probably several very personal reasons. One might be the satisfaction of having pulled off getting your tree dolled up for the show and seeing it displayed among all the other show trees. Another might well be having other people admire the culmination of your efforts over the year or years in producing a show quality tree. Here is where visiting other club shows pays off. When you go to their show, they will come to yours.

Besides the people interaction, visiting other club shows can be a valuable learning experience for you. It allows you to see many more trees than you would see in just the EBBS show. The more trees that you see, the sharper your eye becomes on styling and display. So there is also a personal benefit to going to other club shows.

Each month your trusty newsletter has an article entitled Events by Others which is a listing of upcoming events. There are many fine shows in late winter and early spring and all are very much worth your while to visit. Do take a moment to check out what is going on and plan to put at least one of the shows on you to-do list. It would be just a matter of respect.

Dues

The window is quickly closing. It is nearing your last chance to pay your yearly dues if you have not already done so. If you haven't paid your dues, you will soon be dropped from the subscription list of the really keen EBBS newsletter among other catastrophes. If you haven't already done so, rush your check for \$30 for a single membership or \$40 for couples to our treasurer, Pat Cahill. This entitles you to a subscription to the newsletter by email. If you would prefer a hard copy by snail mail there is an extra charge of \$5 to cover the cost of printing and mailing.

The club dues are a major source of income for the society and are mainly used to fund our largest expenses of the year which are the cost of renting the meeting room as well as the monthly programs. Our treasurer will be delighted to receive your check at the next meeting or you may send it to: EBBS Treasurer, 4933 Cochrane, Oakland, CA, 94618-2701.

Your Newsletter

A bit of background on the fabulous newsletter that you receive each month is in order. First, let's start with a bit of history. For many years Bob Callaham was Mr Newsletter. He did it all, from writing the copy, formatting it for both email as well as for snail mail for those who wanted a hard copy, and distributing the finished newsletter. His background as a professional

technical writer was reflected in the high standard he maintained for the newsletter. He retired a few years ago as the newsletter editor so that he could devote more time to some long overdue projects.

While passing the torch to a new editor, there was a problem. The torch got dropped. One month there was no newsletter. The night of the meeting only seven members showed up and this included four board members. It was truly a dark and stormy night for EBBS. The experience of two other local clubs unrelated to bonsai also indicates that when there was no newsletter, no one came to the meetings even though the meetings have been held for years on the same day of the month.

Two significant observations emerged from the EBBS experience. First, there had to be some sort of meeting announcement each month or the club would rapidly dwindle away. As a result, a very high priority is placed on getting a newsletter to you each month. As a matter of fact, reassuring the membership that there will be a meeting next month as well as reminding them of the meeting is the most single important role of the newsletter. All the other stuff in the newsletter is only a very nice fringe benefit. Most members have elected to receive the newsletter by email, but a few still receive hard copies by snail mail. Second the job of producing and distributing the newsletter is so big that it is unlikely that any one single person would be found to fill the time consuming job. This has led to the current production of the newsletter by a committee.

Linda Soliven writes a column as the club president where she comments on matters of importance to the club. Tom Colby furnishes much of the copy for the newsletter. John does the duplicating, licks the stamps and sends out the snail mail copies. Bob Gould and Pat Cahill serve as the editorial board and check that the facts listed in the copy more or less fit with reality. Michael Hylton has written web-related articles. Don Meeker has written articles on the techniques and art of bonsai. Janice Dilbeck is the backbone of the operation and does the heavy lifting in the production of the newsletter. She serves as a true editor, setting standards for the newsletter, soliciting articles, and maintains the Events by Others article each month. She also does all the technical stuff such as proof reading the final copy and finally formatting it all for email and inclusion onto our web site. Janice is responsible for the pictures and neat little figures in each edition. Last, but by no means least, she graciously accepts last minute changes and additions to the newsletter.

The newsletter is open to anyone who would like to write an article on any bonsai related subject. Articles are particularly desired about events outside the club such as the GSBF convention, the recent shohin convention, or local shows. These currently do not receive the attention in the newsletter that they should beyond the simple announcement that the event will be held. Submit your article to Janice who reserves the right to gently edit it. The current view of the newsletter committee is that the newsletter must be fun to read or

otherwise no one will read it. Hopefully this is reflected in each edition. The newsletter is the voice of the club and your voice should be heard, too.

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 Castelon and Randall Lee. Interested parties can contact Bill at 510-569-8003 or Randall at 510-864-0841. 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 – Do not feed deciduous trees. Begin fertilizing black pines. Delay feeding repotted plants for 2-6 weeks.
- Repotting – Repot deciduous trees, pines, satsuki and junipers
- Styling/Pruning – Prune maples if not pruned in Nov or Dec. Pinch leafing deciduous trees unless trying to redirect growth pattern.
- Graft – All species
- Air Layering – Deciduous trees may be air layered if they have not yet pushed new growth. Otherwise, wait until the new growth hardens in late spring.

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.

March 8 – 9, 2014 Oakland, Bay Area Bonsai Associates: 33rd Annual Bonsai Exhibition at the Lakeside Park Garden Center, 666 Bellevue Avenue. Show hours are Saturday 5 – 9 PM and Sunday 10 AM – 4 PM. Demonstration by satsuki bonsai master Shuisho Nakayama from Japan (co-sponsor by North American Satsuki Bonsai Center) starts at 6:30 PM Saturday, followed by a raffle of the demonstration tree. Continuous plant sale

including bonsai related items (pots, tools, soils, wires, books, etc.) both days. Admission is free. Parking fee to the Lakeside Park entrance is required during the park hours. For more information, please contact Bob Gould at (925) 935-1914.

March 15, 2014, Sacramento, American Bonsai Association, Sacramento: Annual Bus Trip departs The Sacramento Garden & Arts Center, 3330 McKinley Blvd., at 7:30AM and returns at 6:30PM. Five stops are planned in the Santa Rosa and Sebastopol areas: the private collection of Frank and Barbara Bardella, Lone Pine Gardens Nursery, Momiji Maple Nursery, California Carnivores, and West Country Oasis Bamboo Garden. The \$35 fee includes donuts, coffee and water enroute to the area, with a raffle, complimentary drinks (water, sodas, beer, wine) and chips on the return trip. Bring a lunch. This trip is open to the general public. For reservations make checks payable to ABAS c/o Renee Seely, 1636 Vallarta Circle Sacramento, CA 95864. For information phone: (916) 929-2106, e-mail breadcrust@comcast.net or visit our website at <http://abasbonsai.org>

March 19 – 23, 2014 San Mateo, Bonsai Society of San Francisco: Annual Bonsai Exhibit at the San Francisco Flower and Garden Show, San Mateo County Event Center, 1346 Saratoga Drive. Hours: Wednesday – Saturday 10 AM – 7 PM, Sunday 10 AM – 6 PM. There will be demonstrations and trees for sale. For more information about the club, visit our website: www.bssf.org. For group and early bird ticket information to the Flower and Garden Show, visit <http://sfgardenshow.com>.

March 22 – 23, 2014 Santa Cruz, Santa Cruz Bonsai Kai: 26th Annual Show at the Museum of Art & History, 705 Front Street. 10 AM – 5 PM with a demonstration at 2 PM by John Thompson both days. Raffle drawing for demonstration tree after demo each day. Trees especially prepared, trimmed and wired by club members will be part of the raffle each day. Sales area will include both vendor and member trees, pots and other related bonsai items. Admission price includes entry to bonsai show, the Museum of Art & History and complimentary coffee, tea and cookies. For more information contact Ed Lambing at edinbonnydoon@sbcglobal.net.

April 5 – 6, 2014 Sacramento, Bonsai Sekiyu Kai: 37th Annual Bonsai Show at the Sacramento Betsuin Buddhist Church, 2401 Riverside Blvd. Show hours are Saturday Noon – 5 PM and Sunday 10 AM – 4 PM. Demonstrations at 2 PM on both days. Amenities include refreshments, light snacks, door prizes, raffles, and a silent auction. Member and vendor sales of plants and bonsai-related items will also be available. For more information go to bonsaisekiyukai.wordpress.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 four 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

Mar 12 Pines – Bill Castellon
Mar 23 BGLM Introduction to Bonsai – Dennis Hawkins
Apr 9 Oaks – John Thompson
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
