



# The Tree Shrinker

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A MONTHLY BULLETIN

<http://www.eastbaybonsai.org>



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## East Bay Bonsai Society

### April Meeting:

April 8, 2015 @ 7:30 p.m.

### President's Note

So much has changed in a month. Trees are flowering, leaves are coming out. The format for our next club meeting will also change.

Our April meeting will deviate from our normally scheduled program with round table discussions on a variety of bonsai topics. Led by some of our own experts, topics will include: tree and pot selection with Bob Gould, wiring and tools with Janice Dilbeck, soils, watering and maintenance with Tom Colby, and accent plants with Polly Gould! Bring your questions and your advice!

Also, we will have a group tree buying trip to Lone Pine Garden on April 18<sup>th</sup>. We are working on logistics so look for more.

Have a great April!

Michael

### April Meeting

The April meeting will focus on subjects that are helpful to beginners. The meeting title says it all: Tips, Traps and Tricks. The meeting will take the form of short presentations by club members followed by a round table discussion based on what was presented. The format is intended to provide opportunity for questions that both newcomers as well as more experienced members might have. It promises to be not only a fun evening but an informative one.

We will not have a demo tree to raffle, so please be generous in donating raffle items.

Thanks in advance to Bet Neary, Khary Devorak-Ewell and Lynn Hollander for offering to furnish refreshments to the meeting.

### May Meeting



Bill Castellon will present a program on how to create and maintain Bunjin style trees. The bunjin style is also known as literati style. These trees are tall and slender with a minimum of foliage. Really good bunjin trees are not often seen and the

program promises to be a learning experience for us all. Many know Bill as one of the bonsai artists conducting the Merritt College workshops or from the many fine programs that Bill has presented to EBBS in the past. He is an excellent speaker and his subject is one that shouldn't be missed.

### March Meeting

Gordon Deeg presented for the March meeting a program on Japanese Black Pines. He selected this species of pine because of all the pines seen as bonsai, Black Pines are the most vigorous and are the easiest to grow. He began by removing moss which had started to grow on the demonstration tree trunk. The moss on the trunk will eventually cause the bark to rot. This is very undesirable because the bark on the tree is one of the most attractive features of the pine. Care should be taken not to grasp the tree by the trunk when repotting or otherwise working on the tree because this can damage the bark.



The health of the tree can be judged by gently pushing down on the needles with the flat of your hand. If the needles feel prickly, the tree is in good health and can be worked on. If the needles feel soft, the tree is not in condition to be worked on and any work should be delayed until the tree returns to good health.

One of the major tasks for good management of pines is to remove old needles. Needles generally live on the tree for three years, but in the third year the needle no longer benefits the tree. Many of the needles have little buds which can grow into branches, and removal of the needles allows light into the center of the tree which causes the little buds to grow.

In addition to increasing the number of branches on the tree, removal of needles also has another function. Pines are top dominant which means that the top of the tree grows quickly and lower branches slowly die off. Removing needles slows growth of a branch, so removing more needles from the top branches than the lower branches slows growth of the top of the tree and allows the lower branches to remain healthy. Gordon indicated that a popular formula for needle removal is to leave 4 bundles of needles at the top of the tree, five bundles on the middle branches and 6 bundles on the lower branches. This balances the tree, that is, makes the tree grow at a uniform rate from top to bottom.

The best time for needle pulling is November and December, although Gordon stated that needles can be pulled year around. An alternative to pulling the needles is to cut them in half. This slows the rate of growth of the branch, but the needles will turn brown at the site of the cut. As a result, cutting needles should never be done just before a tree is to be placed in a show.

The other major task in growing pines is to cut candles. The candles are the new growth the pine tree pushes in the spring. These new growths will be very long and the needles will also be very long, which does not enhance the look of the tree. These new growths are cut off in late spring, and usually several new growths sprout at the cut. Since it is relatively late in the year, these growths grow slowly and have small needles. Generally, candle cutting is done in the June time frame and is completed by the fourth of July. At the same time you cut the candles, any strong branch that is out of keeping with the rest of the tree can be removed.

The demonstration tree had two features that Gordon focused on. The first was that the tree was quite tall and the upper portion had a section of bare trunk, and above that, poor branching. The bare trunk could have been modified by grafting new branches, but the best alternative was to simply cut off nearly a foot from the top of the tree. A new apex could be grown from one of several branches just below the cut. While this caused gasps from the audience, Gordon assured us that this is a common practice in Japan. With the shorter trunk, the tree appeared to be more massive and in better proportion with the rest of the existing branches. The tree also had multiple branches coming from a single point. Gordon commented that these should be thinned to only one or two and, in contrast to what you might think, the largest branches are the ones to be removed. Leaving the small branches builds taper into the branch and also provides shorter internodes as the branch grows.

The tree had a root that crossed over several other roots. Gordon indicated that the root could be

repositioned when the tree was repotted. Wine corks are great for wedging the root into the proper position since they are relatively soft and do not scar the root, as well as they are fun to procure. For those of us who are not wine drinkers, chop sticks made of pine could be used since they will slowly rot away in the soil after fixing the position of the root. Gordon mentioned that one of the important things to look for when buying a tree is to see that the roots radiate from the trunk. Roots which cross over other roots can be fixed, but it is better not to have them in the first place. Repotting a pine, and particularly an old pine, must be done carefully. Aftercare is to protect the tree from the wind and to keep the tree in the shade and well watered. No fertilizer is applied until the tree shows new growth.



Gordon concluded his presentation with three pearls of wisdom. First, when you work on your tree doing decandling, needle pulling or whatever, work from the top of the tree down. This way any trimmings that fall into the tree are removed as you work. Second, wire the tree from the bottom up so you have more room to work on the upper branches. Finally, never work on a dry tree.

Gordon's presentation was well received and EBBS looks forward to having him return for future meetings.

### **Field Trip**

EBBS is scheduling a field trip to Lone Pine Gardens on Saturday April 18. Lone Pine is one of the largest bonsai nurseries in California and is located in Sebastopol, about 75 miles north of the Bay Area. They feature trees all the way from inexpensive starter trees to nearly finished bonsai, as well as a large assortment of accent plants. Lone Pine has a splendid web site ([www.lonepinegardens.com](http://www.lonepinegardens.com)) where you may get a preview of the treat in store for you.

Suzanne Muller will coordinate carpooling from the East Bay, although you may want to drive yourself so you can visit other nurseries in the area. A nursery featuring carnivorous plants is close by. The plan is to meet at Lone Pine to view the nursery and shop for that

unique treasure, followed by lunch on the nursery grounds. Be sure to bring your lunch.



If you would like to car pool either as a driver or a rider, please contact Suzanne Muller (925-890-0506, [smuller@mbdf.com](mailto:smuller@mbdf.com)) or Lisa Harper (510-220-3339, [lisaharper@me.com](mailto:lisaharper@me.com)).

Recent EBBS meetings have discussed what to look for when you select a tree for bonsai. The trip is a chance to practice what you have learned. There will also be experienced members present to help if you have questions. It is always a fun trip and there is a lot to see even if you are not interested in adding to your bonsai collection at this time.

### **Club Shows**

Probably the most important article in the newsletter is on the back page where it is easily overlooked, and that is the *Events by Others* section. There you will find announcements of significant bonsai activities around the area and in particular, shows by other clubs. If you don't regularly check for upcoming events, you may have missed the recent show by Bay Island Bonsai Society. It was held at the Garden Center and is arguably one of the finest, if not the very finest, shows in the United States.

So what did you miss? First of all you missed a very valuable learning experience. When you display a tree in a show, you present a composition consisting of the tree, the pot, and the stand. The show featured not only superb trees, but also superb compositions, and here was your chance to see some of the best in the country. Although the BIBS show was extraordinary, all shows are worth your while to attend. The more trees

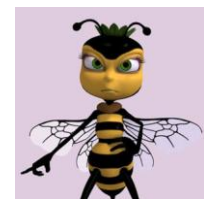
that you see in shows, the sharper your eye becomes on styling and display. Sadly, many of us visit shows to shop the vendors and talk to our friends, and miss the valuable lessons to be learned by carefully studying the trees in the show.

There is another very personal benefit to going to other shows in the area. Take a moment and think about why you display a tree in a show. There are probably several 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. If you don't go to their show, why should they come to yours and see your lovely tree?

Lastly there is an idea that was present in the early bonsai clubs that were founded shortly after the Second World War. For the most part, these clubs were for members of the Japanese community. These members brought with them a 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. It was respect for the members of the other club, respect for the artistic skill they had employed in preparing their trees for the show, and respect for the trees. Most bonsai clubs now have few Japanese members, and we have lost the concept of respect which is a shame. Next time that you go to a bonsai show, take a moment after you have seen what the vendors have to offer and you have greeted your friends, and think about the club members, their efforts to put on the show, and then admire the trees in the show. After all, those are the things that are what the show should be about.

### **Your Newsletter**

Your newsletter has become quite a production. The queen bee is our crusading editor, Janice Dilbeck. She organizes it each month and distributes the email copies to the club. She also sets the tone for the newsletter with her ringing mandate that each article should be both informative and fun. Her reasoning is that if the article is not informative, why bother printing it, and if the article is not fun to read, no one will read it. It is a big job, but like most queen bees she has a lot of worker bees to help her. John Nackley, Michael Hylton and Tom Colby are investigative reporters who have provided copy for the newsletter. Don Meeker contributed a fine article on bonsai soil that was so complete and exhaustive that it was presented in three segments. Pat Cahill and Bob Gould review rough drafts of the newsletter to be sure that what was given as facts were, in fact, pretty much true. John Nackley mails the few hard copies that some members want. Presidents John Nackley, Linda Soliven and Michael Hylton have used the president's message in the newsletter to communicate their perspective on what the club is, should be, and isn't doing.



The inclusion of illustrations makes the newsletter really come alive. Janice is responsible for the cartoon figures as well as some of the images. Only the queen bee knows where she gets the funky images, but they certainly add spice to the newsletter. Your newsletter has a photojournalist department just like the uptown newspapers like the New York Times. Michael Hylton and Suzanne Muller provide images of club activities. Suzanne is not only one of our photojournalists, but also is active on the EBBS board. She also spearheaded the food activity in the recent big sale by the bonsai garden. Suzanne deserves a big pat on the back and a big thank you not only for her efforts on behalf of the club, but also as serving as a splendid example of how a newcomer can become involved in the club activities.

As you can see, Janice has lots of worker bees to help her. The newsletter is truly the voice of the club. If you would like to have your voice heard, submit an article to the newsletter by giving it to Janice with the understanding that she may gently edit it. If you don't feel that your writing is quite up to Shakespearean quality but you do have an idea for an article, let Janice know and perhaps she can find someone to do the writing for you. Don't be shy--your ideas for the newsletter are important.

#### **New Members and Roster Updates**

We have two new members in the club, Joe Lee and Frank Puccio. We also have one returning member, Dennis Hawkins. Please introduce yourselves to them at our next club meeting. Their email addresses and/or phone numbers are:

Dennis Hawkins – (510) 657-8229,

[idhawk@comcast.net](mailto:idhawk@comcast.net)

Joe Lee – (210) 287-7607, [joelee@jklee.us](mailto:joelee@jklee.us)

Frank Puccio – (925) 432-3911

#### **Bonsai Sale**

On April 11 and 12, Jimmy Inadomi is selling bonsai and landscape plants. The sale will be from 11 am – 1:30 pm only. The location of the sale is 17492 San Franciscan Drive, in Castro Valley. For more information, contact Richard Inadomi at (510) 886-2251.



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

The bonsai instruction is in the form of workshops which are a splendid opportunity to learn about how to develop your trees into first class bonsai. In these workshops you work on your own trees under the guidance of an experienced bonsai artist. The workshops are open to all experience levels.

The workshops are held at 7:00 pm on the fourth Monday of each month that the college is in session. The meetings are held in the Landscape Horticulture Building at Merritt College which is located in the

Oakland hills off Redwood Road. Leading the workshops are two outstanding bonsai artists, Bill Castellon and Randall Lee and both are also members of EBBS.

For more information, contact Bill at 510-569-8003 or Randall at 510-846-0841. The workshops are free (except for a small parking fee) and are a wonderful learning experience. All you need to take advantage of them is to just show up with your tree.

#### **Bonsai Calendar**

- Watering – Start regular watering schedule as temperature rises; Do not over-water repotted plants
- Fertilizing – Do not feed deciduous trees Fertilize evergreens and conifers. Don't feed repotted trees until a month after repotting.
- Repotting – Repot pines, camellias, cryptomeria, juniper, crape myrtle, willow, spruce, fir, cypress and redwood
- Styling/Pruning – Wire evergreens. Pinch junipers. Trim back branches on non-flowering, non-fruiting deciduous trees. Decandle Monterey pines, red pines, and cork-barked black pines.
- Graft – Japanese maples, hornbeam, redbud, beech, ginkgo, and wisteria
- 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 Tues. - Fri. 11:00 am – 3:00 pm, Sat. 10:00 am – 4:00 pm, Sun. 12:00 noon – 4:00 pm Enter at gate across from Boat House.

April 11-12, Sacramento, American Bonsai Association, Sacramento's 56th Annual Spring Show will be held at the Shepard Garden and Arts Center in McKinley Park, 3330 McKinley Blvd, Sacramento, CA. Open Saturday: 10:00 AM – 5:00 PM, and Sunday: 10:00 AM – 4:00 PM. Headliner Dan Robinson, known as 'The Picasso of Bonsai', will demonstrate his skill for adding a dose of antiquity to a tree's soul. Demonstrations will be held on both Saturday and Sunday beginning at 1:30 PM. The club is offering a member-led, hands-on beginner workshop Sunday morning. Those interested may sign up Saturday, or Sunday before 10:00. The show will feature a large member and vendor sales area with a daily silent auction of quality bonsai and accessories. Benefit drawings will be held each day after the

demonstration to include the demonstration tree and other trees and bonsai-related items. For more information visit <http://www.abasbonsai.org/>

April 18, Napa, Napa Valley Bonsai Club: Annual Show at the Napa Senior Center, 1500 Jefferson St., Hours are 11 AM – 4 PM with demonstrations at 2 PM with Jonas Dupuich. Vendors, Silent Auction and raffle of demo tree. Huge outdoor sales area with trees, pots, and bonsai related items. For more information please visit [www.nvbonsai.org](http://www.nvbonsai.org).

April 18 – 19, Modesto, Modesto Bonsai Club: 34th Annual Spring Show and Exhibit, Park Inn by Radisson, 1720 Sisk Rd. Show hours are Saturday 11 AM – 5 PM and Sunday 11 AM – 4 PM with demonstration by Sam Adina at 2 PM both days. Free admission. Exhibit, Raffle, Beginners Workshops and more!! Sales of plants, pots and other bonsai items both days (with auction immediately following demo). For more information contact Peter Camarena at (209) 529-1759.

April 25 – 26, Sacramento, Bonsai Sekiyu Kai: Annual show will be held at the Sacramento Buddhist Church, 2401 Riverside Blvd. Hours are: Saturday Noon – 5 PM and Sunday 10 AM – 4 PM. Demonstration 2 PM both days by Yuzo Maruyama. 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 contact Doug Hamby at (916) 273-2328 or [doughamby@gmail.com](mailto:doughamby@gmail.com).

May 2 – 3, Palo Alto, Kusamura Bonsai Club: 55th Annual Show at the Lucie Stern Community Center, 1305 Middlefield Road. Show hours are Noon – 5 PM on Saturday and 11 AM – 5 PM on Sunday with a demonstration at 1 PM each day; special guest demonstrator Saturday. Club member sales available. For more information contact Mark O'Brien at (650) 327-0450 or [mobrientrees@hotmail.com](mailto:mobrientrees@hotmail.com). The club's website: [www.kusamurabonsai.org](http://www.kusamurabonsai.org) also has more details.

May 2 – 3, Sacramento, Sacramento Bonsai Club: 69th Annual Bonsai & Suiseki Show at Buddhist Church of Sacramento, 2401 Riverside Blvd. Hours are Noon – 5 PM Saturday and 10 AM – 4 PM Sunday with demonstrations on both days at 2 PM by Sam Adina. Benefit drawings, plant and tree sales. For more info visit [www.sacramentobonsaiclub.com](http://www.sacramentobonsaiclub.com) or contact Gary Judd at [juddbonsai@att.net](mailto:juddbonsai@att.net) or 916-622-8048.

### 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.

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## **East Bay Bonsai Society—Schedule for 2015**

**Regular Meetings:** Second Wednesday, every month (except August and October) @ 7:30 pm

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>April 8</b>	Tips, Traps and Tricks
<b>April 26</b>	BGLM Introduction to Bonsai – Tom Colby
<b>May 13</b>	Bunjin – Bill Castellon
<b>May 24</b>	BGLM Introduction to Bonsai – Bob Gould
<b>June 10</b>	Frolic in the Garden
<b>June 28</b>	BGLM Introduction to Bonsai – J D Lin
<b>July 8</b>	Auction
<b>July 26</b>	BGLM Introduction to Bonsai – John Nackley
<b>Aug</b>	Picnic
<b>Aug 23</b>	BGLM Introduction to Bonsai – Janet Nelson
<b>Sept 9</b>	Tropicals – Jerry Carpenter
<b>Sept 27</b>	BGLM Introduction to Bonsai – Don Meeker
<b>Oct 14</b>	No club meeting due to proximity to show
<b>Oct 25</b>	BGLM Introduction to Bonsai – Tom Colby
<b>Nov 11</b>	Juniper Jubilee – Mike Pistello
<b>Nov 22</b>	BGLM Introduction to Bonsai – Bob Gould
<b>Dec 9</b>	Holiday Dinner

**Special Events**

**April 18** Field Trip

**Oct 10-11** Fall Show – Ryan Nichols

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