



The Tree Shrinker

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A MONTHLY BULLETIN

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East Bay Bonsai Society

Annual Show: October 10-11, 2015

October Meeting: ~~October 14, 2014 CANCELED~~

President's Note

Well, October is our BIG event! It's nearly upon us. I hope by now you are getting your show trees ready and have signed up for various volunteer efforts. We will need your help throughout the three days, including show set-up on Friday at 6pm at the Garden Center to packing up at show end on Sunday at 4pm. Your efforts will go a long way to making this year's show the best.

November we will again have Mike Pistello hosting our "Juniper Jubilee" meeting so I encourage you to attend. And then in December we will have our annual pot luck holiday party.

See you at all of these future EBBS events!

Michael

It is Show Time!

Our annual show will be held on Saturday, October 10 and Sunday, October 11 at the Lakeside Garden Center. Show hours are 10:00 to 5:00 on Saturday and 11:00 to 4:00 on Sunday. Setup for the show is from 6:00 to 10:00 on Friday, October 9.

The headliner for the show is Ryan Nichols. He is a horticulturist who is an expert on soils, and water transport from soils to the roots of the tree. This will be the first time that Ryan has presented at a Northern California show and we welcome him.

Saturday morning Ryan will give a presentation to BABA on fungicides and pesticides, and EBBS members are welcome to attend. Saturday afternoon he will preside over a workshop. On Sunday morning he will conduct a critique of trees in the show, and in the afternoon he will do a demonstration on a Black Pine.

The best way to enjoy the show is to participate. There are a lot of opportunities to participate because a successful show requires the help of a lot of people doing a wide variety of activities. Every member should volunteer to help with at least one of the many activities that are necessary for a smooth running show. Help is particularly needed for security, although all of the various committees could use a hand. If a committee

chairperson calls, be prepared to give generously of your time.

All types of trees are welcome in the show. Since this is a fall show, deciduous trees in fall color and trees with fruits or berries are especially welcome. Everyone should exhibit at least one tree in the show. Many of us only have trees that are in the early stages of becoming finished bonsai. Rest assured that these trees are most welcome in the show. As usual, there will probably be some bonsai masterpieces on display but, while these trees are wonderful additions to the show, they are not where the action is for an EBBS show. Our show is for **all** the members to participate and enjoy, and the result is that everyone is welcome to display his trees. If you have not displayed a tree before, you'll be surprised at how nice it looks when dolled up for the show. Preparing your tree for the show is not hard. Be sure that your tree is bug free, the weeds are removed, dead leaves and unwanted small branches are trimmed and the pot is cleaned. A coat of mineral oil on an unglazed pot will show it at its best. If you do not have a stand for your tree, there may be a few stands available for loan at the show set up.

The show is the high point of the year for the club. The fun comes in knowing that you actively participated in the show by displaying a tree and volunteering to help on one of the many committees needed to make the show run smoothly.

Your Trees

Tree labels are created for all of the bonsai in the show. Please send Don Meeker a list of the trees you may display no later than October 5 so that he can create labels for your trees. Contact him at dmeeker@ca.astound.net or 925-933-4472. Also, if you are interested in doing a Tokonoma, a more formal display of your tree, please contact Janice Dilbeck at janicedilbeck@comcast.net or 925-458-3845.



Schedule of Events

The schedule of the weekend activities are as follows:

Friday Night

6:00 pm Show setup starts
10:00 pm Set up finished, doors locked

Saturday

9:00 am Hall is opened
9:30 am BABA program in Ebell Room
10:00 am Show and sale open to the public
11:30 am Hospitality room opens for lunch
12:30 pm BABA critique ends
1:00 pm Workshop in Ebell room
2:00 pm Hospitality room closes
4:00 pm Workshop ends
5:00 pm Show and sale close to the public

Sunday

9:00 am Hall is opened
9:30 am Critique of the show by Ryan
11:00 am Show and sale is open to the public
11:30 am Hospitality room opens for lunch
1:00 pm Demonstration begins in the Ebell Room
2:00 pm Hospitality room closes
3:30 pm Benefit drawing begins
4:00 pm Plant sales and vendor sales close
4:00 pm Show closes and teardown commences

Show Set-up - Friday Evening

Volunteers are needed to arrive early and help with installing the tables and backdrops. Doors of the Lakeside Garden center will be open for work to start at 6:00 pm. You don't have to go home for dinner before helping with set up because the club will provide pizza and beverages for all workers.

All trees and accent plants are to be delivered to the central hallway before 7:00 pm. Trees can be placed on the tables along the wall. It is helpful if trees intended for tokonomas are so identified.

Come and join the camaraderie of the show set up. In addition to a lot of work, it is also a lot of fun.

Lunch at the show

EBBS lunches are available on both days to members and honored guests. The style is potluck with augmentation and beverages furnished by the club. Assignments for both days are as follows:

Appetizer Last name M-R
Entrée Last name S-Z
Side dish Last name A-G
Dessert Last name H-L

In each case make the dish for 8-10 people and be sure to provide serving utensils if required.

Show Plant Sale

The show is very important to the club in many ways. It is easy to overlook the fact that the sale of plants and bonsai related items such as pots, scrolls and stands is a real money maker which goes a long way toward funding the cost of the show. Look at your collection and see if there is something that you would like to send to a new and loving home.



Our recent auction featured trees that were well along in development as opposed to small cuttings. For many of the folks who drop by the show, this is their first look at what bonsai is all about. They are thrilled to take home a small cutting in a pot, and as a result, these little plants sell like hot cakes. Above all, it is important to remember that something you no longer have interest in may be a treasure to someone else.

As with the auction, items may be donated to the club where 100% of the selling price goes to the club, or may be sold on consignment where 20% of the selling price goes to the club leaving 80% to the seller. The more attractive you make your tree, the more likely that it will sell. Simple things you can do to improve the appearance of the tree are to remove any weeds and dead leaves, and trim awkward branches. Here is a place to practice your merchandising skills by turning your tree into a bit of eye candy.

The fine print for the details of the sale is exactly the same as for our recent auction. Forms and tags will be available and each seller must complete an inventory form listing and describing each item, and showing the selling price or clearly designating that the item is a donation. A completed tag must be placed on each item.

New this year, we have EBBS plant stakes for everyone to insert into their plants for sale. These are good advertisements for our club and will be available at set-up for you to add to your sale items.

You may reduce the price of an item during the show, but be sure that you have amended the inventory sheet to reflect the new price. Donated items must be clearly identified on the inventory sheet.

Workshop at the Show

On Saturday afternoon Ryan will lead a workshop where members bring and work on their own trees. Ryan will provide his expert guidance on styling, pruning and wiring your tree as well as describing future care of your tree. The cost of the workshop is \$50 and attendance is limited to 6 members. Payment is due by noon on October 10. If you are interested in coming to the workshop, sign up promptly because spaces are going fast. Lisa Harper is in charge of the workshop and may be contacted at 510-220-3339 or at lisaharper@me.com. Participants should arrive by 12:30

in order to set up and be ready to begin the workshop promptly at 1:00.

The workshop is open to silent observers who may circulate around the room to learn from listening to the discussions and observing the work in progress. Observers are expected to respect the priority and work space of the paid participants and the workshop leader.

Sunday Morning Critique

A critique of the trees in the show will be conducted by Ryan on Sunday morning starting at 9:30 am. This is a wonderful experience for each of us and is by far the most valuable part of the show. No matter where your tree is in its development, he can point out changes that will make the tree even better. He will also comment on how the trees are displayed, i.e. the choice of pot, stand and scroll if used. Seeing the show through the eyes of an experienced bonsai artist is always a privilege and always expands our knowledge of bonsai.

A Plea

Do plan to spend at least a little time at the conclusion of the show at 4:00 pm on Sunday to help with the clean up before you depart the scene. At the end of the show, all of us are tired and we are all anxious to grab our trees and go home. This is perfectly understandable, but it leaves tear down of the tables and general cleanup all too frequently to a few hardy souls. These folks would greatly appreciate your help.

Ryan Nichols

Ryan earned a degree in Ornamental Horticulture at Cal Poly in 2010 and a Master's degree in Plant Biology in 2013. He now teaches in the Plant Science Department at Cal Poly Pomona. When not teaching at Cal Poly, Ryan travels throughout California giving seminars on horticultural aspects of the art of bonsai, doing tree styling demonstrations, maintains the BACK TO THE ROOTS Nursery, and teaches species-specific classes for bonsai cultivation. From childhood drawings to professional landscape designs, there has always been a common thread of art and creativity in Ryan's life. As a young child, Ryan learned the importance of aesthetic design growing up in his mothers flower shop.

After high school Ryan left plants behind, but held tight to design as he studied architecture while working part-time for a local architect. Soon after, Ryan began to study landscape architecture to incorporate his two passions, plants and design. A year later a collapsing economy would throw a curve ball, forcing Ryan to leave design and focus on plants. In 2010, after earning a degree in horticulture, Ryan anxiously awaited the day he could return to design when a friend of his asked him if he had ever heard of the art of bonsai. When a simple Google search turned into several hours of research, Ryan was hooked. Through his internet research Ryan can across Ryan Neil, a 6 year returning apprentice of the world renowned bonsai master Masahiko Kimura. Ryan immediately began studying

with Ryan Neil and was amazed at the level of quality and craftsmanship that could be accomplished with focused study and dedication.

For Ryan, the art of bonsai became a harmonious blend between plants and design, which allowed him to get BACK TO HIS ROOTS, and the rest was history. Most recently Ryan was awarded first place in the 2014 Joshua Roth New Talent Competition. Ryan continues to study bonsai under Ryan Neil and with other local bonsai masters in the southern California area. Ryan's approach to bonsai and design is form follows function, striving to balance science with art.

November Meeting

The November meeting will be our fourth annual celebration of the Juniper Jubilee (JJ4) which focuses on the humble workhorse of the bonsai world, the juniper. Many of us started our journey in bonsai with a small juniper. Not only is the juniper forgiving of our misguided early attempts at culture and styling, but in many cases can be developed into truly spectacular bonsai. Mike Pistello will show us how it is done. Mike gave a fine presentation for JJ3 last year and we are fortunate to have Mike back again.



September Meeting

The September meeting featured Jerry Carpenter discussing tropical trees. Many of us know Jerry from his column in the **Golden Statements** entitled ***Nebari.net-Bonsai in the Age of the Internet*** in which he presents information which he has mined from the internet. He is particularly interested in the science behind bonsai culture, and this interest was ever present in his presentation.

The most striking feature of his presentation was that tropical trees are very aggressive growers. They can be defoliated as many as four or five times a year. Jerry brought several tropical trees and, during his demonstration, he methodically pretty much totally defoliated them. Most of the deciduous trees that we grow as bonsai can be defoliated once, or in rare cases, twice a year. The point of the defoliation is to increase the branching of the tree. Defoliation also sharply reduces the size of the leaves. Not only is the foliage fast growing but also the roots quickly fill the pot. Jerry repots his trees every year to make room for the roots to grow.

The first tree that Jerry worked on demonstrated the extent to which these trees can be cut back. When Jerry first got the tree it was a large bush. He reduced it to a shohin sized tree and then allowed it to grow a little larger but not by much.

The great advantage of tropical trees is that they can grow and thrive in the house. They love to be outside, but when the temperature falls below 60 degrees they must be brought in. A sign of too low temperature is yellowing of the leaves. Jerry uses a potting mix of lava, akadama and pumice.



He avoids fir bark in his potting mix.

Some trees exude a latex-like sap when cut which can cause an allergic reaction in some people. Fortunately, most people do not have this reaction.

Heavy branches are best cut off on a diagonal rather than a flat cut which cause multiple branches to sprout. Jerry is a great advocate of copper wire to move branches. If the branch is small he loosely wraps copper wire around the branch. He calls this "caging" the branch. If a major branch needs to be moved which requires tight wiring, he threads copper wire through rubber tubing to prevent scarring.

Many Ficus species readily grow aerial roots as a result of high humidity and abundant water. This gives a very cool tropical look to the tree, but the branches above the aerial roots quickly grow out of proportion to the rest of the tree. As a result, Jerry removes them. Most tropical trees thrive with lots of water and high humidity. A sign that the tree needs water is that the trunk shrinks and bark on the trunk begins to take a lumpy appearance. When adequate water is supplied, the trunk swells and the bark becomes smooth again.

The presentation was a fascinating look into a group of trees that we don't usually see. Jerry's talk inspired many of us to investigate these remarkable trees.

Staging a show

When the show is set up on Friday night there is a lot to do, like bringing in your trees and stands for the show, arranging the tables and preparing the tables for the show. It is easy to miss something amazing that is happening. One would think that all that is needed is to place the trees somewhere on the tables and then the setup is complete. For many club shows that is correct. The better clubs, including EBBS, spend a great amount of care on how and where the trees are placed, and this may be something new for you.

You have heard that your tree, pot and stand are a single composition. You may be surprised to learn that the display of trees in a show is also a single composition. First of all, large dominant trees are placed in the center of the long rows of tables which forms an anchor or climax for the whole row. Most trees appear to lean to one side or the other either because the trunk actually leans that way or there is more foliage on one side than the other. Trees that lean toward the left are positioned on the right side of the row as you face it so they point toward the dominant tree. Similarly right leaning tree are positioned on the left side of the row. Trees chosen for each end of the row are especially nice trees and they end the row sort of like a period at the end of a sentence. There are spaces between the tokonoma displays and trees are selected that are what you see against the wall when you walk through the tokonoma displays.



As you can see, arranging trees in a show requires a lot of careful planning to show all the trees to their best advantage as well as to show the whole display to its best. Janice Dilbeck will again work her magic in organizing the tree display as she has done in past years. EBBS is fortunate to have someone with her talent willing to do this. On Friday night spend a moment watching her in action. Also be sure to look at the display over the weekend when it is all set up to see how it all comes together. You will see the show display in a new light.

Pots

One of the perplexing problems to the new member of a bonsai club is choosing the right pot for your tree. When they purchased the tree it was in a pot, and isn't that good enough? Maybe it is not. When the tree is displayed it is part of a composition which includes the tree, the pot and the stand. Imagine being a lady invited to a fancy ball and you wear your beautiful Armani gown and your best jewelry and the tennis shoes that you used to work in the garden. That would be about the same effect as displaying a tree in a poorly chosen pot. So how do you pick the right pot?

A frequently quoted approach is to divide all trees into two groups, masculine and feminine. An example of a masculine tree is a stately pine tree, and a feminine tree example is a graceful maple tree. Many bonsai pots

are either oval shaped or rectangular. The former is said to be feminine and the latter is masculine. So far so good. In theory all you have to do is to choose a masculine pot for a masculine tree and you are done. The problem with rigidly classifying all trees and pots into one of two groups is that there are many trees and pots that do not fit clearly into either group. A massive collected juniper with lots of craggy dead wood would appear to be a very masculine tree, but the beautiful flowing curved lines of the trunk and dead wood are features of the tree which seem to be feminine.

A way toward a choice of pot for your tree which bypasses a rigid classification into either masculine or feminine groups is to simply look at your tree. What is the most important feature of the tree that catches your eye? The pot you choose should echo this feature. Dave De Groot in his book, **Basic Bonsai Design**, offers a useful way of looking at what you might see in your tree and that is to consider a group of attributes, some or all of which your tree may have.

If the tree has a straight trunk and regular spacing of the branches, has a feeling of strength or drama or has the appearance of great age such as rough bark or deadwood, then the best choice of pot is a rectangular pot that has straight walls and plain feet and is of heavy construction. An unglazed pot would be best for this tree.

On the other hand, the tree may have an appearance of gentleness and grace, have gentle movement of the trunk line, have smooth bark or may appear to be young, indicated by lack of dead wood. Then the best pot is a rounded or oval form with curved walls and light color. Trees in flower or fruit also fall into this group. A glazed pot would work well. The construction of the pot should appear to be light with thin walls and small, curved feet.

Back to the collected juniper that didn't seem to easily fit into either masculine or feminine classifications. The dominant features of many collected junipers are the curved trunk and the swirling flow of the exposed grain of the dead wood. An oval pot reflects this nicely in spite of the fact that you would be placing a tree with a lot of masculine characteristics in a feminine pot.

One of the things that make bonsai such an exciting activity is that it is as much art as it is science. This means that there are few clear, unambiguous answers, and this is particularly true when choosing the best pot for your tree. A great place to start is to simply look at your tree and decide what is the most important feature. Then find a pot which enhances or reflects this feature.

Bonsai Instruction at Merritt College

The bonsai workshops at Merritt College will continue on the fourth Monday of each month that the college is in session. They are a splendid opportunity to learn how to develop your own tree into a first class bonsai. You will work under the guidance of an

experienced bonsai artist. The workshops are open to all experience levels.

The workshops are held at 7:00 pm in the Horticulture Building at Merritt College which is located off Redwood Road in the Oakland hills. Leading the workshops are two distinguished bonsai artists who are also members of EBBS, Bill Castellon and Randall Lee. The workshops are a wonderful learning experience and, best of all, they are free (except for a small parking fee). All you have to do to take advantage of them is to just show up with your tree. For more information, call Bill at 510-569-8003 or Randall at 510-846-0841.

Roster Updates

We have a few new members in the club. Please add the following people to your roster:

Steve Nelson and Audrey Esquivel at 415-845-8674, and sroynelson@yahoo.com

Greg Seff at 510-289-0591, and elgregas@hotmail.com.

Please introduce yourselves to them to at our show.

Bonsai Calendar

- Sun – Continue to move shaded deciduous trees into sun to promote fall color.
- Watering – Adjust watering for fall, but don't under-water.
- Fertilizing – Use low or zero nitrogen fertilizers.
- Repotting – Repot when plants become dormant. Begin repotting flowering and fruiting varieties of prunus.
- Styling/Pruning – Shape both evergreens and deciduous trees.
- Insect and disease control – Remove dead plant material. Watch for and treat insect infestations.
- Propagating/Collecting – Begin root cuttings.

Refer to the EBBS Bonsai Calendar for more details on seasonal care.

Bonsai Society of San Francisco offers a Pottery Workshop

BSSF has a program coming up in November that I'd like to open up to your members. Thomas Arakawa is a potter in the Bay Area. He is from Japan but has lived in the United States for many years. We met him at the Cherry Blossom Festival earlier this year. On Nov 21st we have scheduled two three-hour workshops with Thomas. The workshops are from 1PM to 4PM and from 5PM to 8PM in the County Fair Building at Golden Gate Park. During each workshop Thomas will describe techniques for pot making and then he and his assistant

will work with us to create 2-3 pots. We will make the pots from slabs of clay. Participants can bring molds if they like. Thomas will glaze and fire the pots after the workshop, and then return the pots to the participant within 4-5 weeks. The cost of the workshop is \$80. People that want more time to make more pots are welcome to sign up for both sessions. We need at least 10 people in each workshop. We will go up to 15 at each.

Here is our [website page](#) about this workshop. For more information, please email, text or call me.

Thanks,

Catherine
Catherine Wolf
Vice President
Bonsai Society of San Francisco
Cell – 415-299-7061
catherine.wolf@autodesk.com

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.

October 17 – 18, Union City, Yamato Bonsai Kai: 44th
Annual Bonsai Exhibition at the Southern Alameda
County Buddhist Church, 32975 Alvarado-Niles Rd.
Hours are Saturday Noon to 6 PM and Sunday 10
AM to 5 PM. Demonstrations each day at 2 PM by

Johnny Uchida, with Mike Baker and Tony Hayworth. Benefit raffle each day after the demo. Raffle includes the demo tree. Large Vendor and Plant Sales area. Free Admission & Parking. For additional information, call Tony Hayworth at 510-289-5731 or visit our web site at www.yamatobonsai.org.

October 24 – 25, Sacramento, Capital City Bonsai Association: 15th Annual Show supporting GSBF Bonsai Garden at Lake Merritt and Sacramento bonsai clubs. Shepard Garden Center in McKinley Park, 3330 McKinley Blvd. Hours are 10 AM – 5 PM Saturday and 10 AM – 4 PM Sunday, with demonstration both days at 1:30 PM by sponsor clubs with bonsai benefit drawings to follow. Vendor and club sales throughout the show. For more information contact Gary Judd at 916-622-8048 or juddbonsai@att.net.

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 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

Oct 14	No club meeting due to proximity to show
Oct 25	BGLM Introduction to Bonsai – Tom Colby
Nov 11	Juniper Jubilee – Mike Pistello
Nov 22	BGLM Introduction to Bonsai – Bob Gould
Dec 9	Holiday Dinner

Special Events

Oct 10-11 Fall Show – Ryan Nichols

Nov 21 Wire Workshop – John Doig

Preparing trees for show

This article was assembled from a variety of sources, edited and written by Bob Callaham. It was published in a past Tree Shrinker and is presented here because of its timely content. Thanks Bob

Watering

- Trees become desiccated during shows, so water your tree thoroughly on Friday morning, before you apply top dressing

Crown

- Fine wiring is the key to detailed grooming, but for a tree to be shown this fall it should have been wired in March or last fall
- Remove wire that has served its purpose; no wire should be seen crossing the trunk
- Shorten or remove elongate new shoots, so-called water sprouts
- Reshape carefully and only slightly to avoid crown having a static (symmetrical) shape; prune only coarse branching to leave fine branching; apply fine wire and move branches to appropriate positions
- Remove undergrowth on each branch; show undersides of major branches
- Cutback foliage that interferes with viewing of trunk; shorten to two leaves or remove entirely
- Pay particular attention to the apex; as a focal point it needs special attention; assure that it bows to the viewer (except on a formal-upright styled tree)
- Remove any yellowing or brown foliage
- Examine critically the trunk and branches, remove any unsightly stubs of branches, and apply cut-paste

Trunk

- When appropriate, spray trunk with water and rub with tooth (or wire) brush to remove bark flakes
- Remove white deposits of minerals from watering when present on base of trunk and exposed roots; start this process with a toothbrush; progress to a nylon brush; finally go to a soft brass metal brush

Growing mix

- Add mix to cover exposed roots up to just below their departure from the root collar; sever small exposed roots or cover them with mix
- Remove all moss and liverworts growing on either the trunk or exposed roots
- Remove debris from soil surface

Top-dressing

- Apply a very thin layer of relatively fine, uniform particles; make the layer level with pot's rim; extend it to trunk but not over exposed roots
- Consider using 1/8"–1/4" screened fir bark, 1/16"–1/8" screened expanded shale, black lava, or combinations (sources are Clarke's Rocks at Clwitter and Wilson in Hayward and American Soil Products in Richmond); press down firmly and then brush lightly for uniform texture
- Moss, if appropriate as a top-dressing under your tree, should be fresh and green; mixes or mosaics of mosses and lichens give a more natural look; moss should be patchy, not "wall-to-wall"; islands of moss in a top dressing of black lava are attractive; screened fine bark sprinkled over moss and then lightly brushed off gives a natural look

Accent and companion plants

- Plant(ing) should be about 5 in. high for an average tree or 7 in. for a very large tree. In Japan, where stands are tall, plants are not taller than top of stand
- Clean out dead and dying vegetation, except when it gives the very desirable appearance of natural growth in fall where dead and dying members bend over and touch the ground while living members stand tall
- Remove debris, moss, and liverworts, as above
- Apply moss or appropriately sized top-dressing

Pots and stands

- Remove mineral residue on pots by applying white vinegar or rubbing alcohol to a cloth and rubbing; stubborn deposits may require rubbing with a green "Scotch" scrubber; erasers for cleaning tools also are effective on pots; do not remove pot's patina and leave it shiny; pot's feet are hardest to clean but most obvious if not cleaned; Kathy Shaner recommends leaving calcium deposit and dying it with India ink
- Just before the show, wipe unglazed pots with mineral or vegetable oil on a "hard," lint-free rag (old toweling); buff with a dry lint-free rag; may spray with kitchen olive oil, rub off excess, and buff
- Apply felt pads to feet of pots to prevent scratching of stands
- Polish stands and apply scratch remover where needed