



The Tree Shrinker

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A MONTHLY BULLETIN

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East Bay Bonsai Society

Auction: July 13, 2016 Preview @ 7:00 p.m. Auction @ 7:30 p.m.

President's Note

Our biggest fundraiser event is nearly upon us and I hope you consider supporting EBBS. What could this be? Of course, it's our Annual Auction. Look around your collection and consider selling or donating trees, pots, tools, etc. – anything that you consider greater than \$10 in value (our minimum).

A big thanks to our very own, Rick Trumm, for his great session this month on pines.

Come to our July 13th auction and bid high and bid often. It's a great opportunity to build up your collection and get good deals! Thanks to all of the volunteers in hoping to making it a great event!

Michael

July meeting



Excitement is building for our annual auction in July. The auction will be held at our usual meeting place and set up for the auction will start at 6:00 pm. The auction will start promptly at 7:30. Auction items can be received no later than 7:30 and preferably earlier to allow time to log in and tag your auction items. Tags and seller's sheets will be available to register your sale items. To avoid duplicate tag numbers, please use three initials on your tags. You should have also

reviewed what is available for sale, have your bidding paddle, and be fully ready to participate in the furious action.

The auction provides a wonderful opportunity for you to practice your merchandising skills. If you want to sell a tree, anything that you can do to the tree that allows the potential customer to more easily visualize the tree as a finished bonsai will lead to a higher selling price. The most obvious first step is to remove any weeds growing in the pot. It may surprise you to know that trees once in a while do, in fact, show up in the auction complete with weeds. Not surprisingly, they don't sell for very much. Trees in bonsai pots sell better than trees in plastic cans. Trees in bonsai pots benefit from a bit of top dressing. Branches that are not clearly of value to the finished bonsai can be trimmed off. Partial wiring of a branch or two also helps. If you are selling a pot, scrub out the residual dirt. Stands can always use a bit of furniture polish to spiff them up.

Note that the minimum projected selling price for all items is \$10, so save the little seedlings in a Dixie cup for our show in the fall where very inexpensive items sell quickly. There is a limit of 10 items that can be entered in the auction. Items can be bundled as, for example, a box of several pots sold as a group will count as one item. As usual, the club keeps 20% of the selling price and you get the rest to hopefully use to buy more stuff at the auction. Of course you can also donate your item to the auction where the club gets the total selling price. This is a great way to support your club.

There are always fine things to be found at the auction to upgrade your collection, and generally at most affordable prices. The auction is not only a lot of fun, but also is a very important fundraiser for the club. It deserves your support in providing items for sale, buying lots of stuff and helping out with the many tasks required to make it all run smoothly. Suzanne Muller is in charge of the auction. See her if you want to volunteer to help. She could really use your help.

August Potluck

Instead of our regular meeting for the month of August we will meet on Saturday, August 20, at the home of Rick Trumm and Janet Nelson for our annual

potluck dinner. The affair will run from 3:30 until sunset. Our potluck is always a rewarding affair where we get to visit with our fellow members in a social setting. We also get to enjoy seeing a fine collection of outstanding bonsai. Lastly, and certainly not least, we get to share the products of the many fine cooks who grace our membership. Do save the date. The potluck is one of the funnest events of the year.

June Meeting



The June meeting featured a presentation on the care and feeding of Japanese black pine by our very own Rick Trumm. He offered a splendid handout which detailed all you need to know about black pines and when you need to do it. The handout is attached to this newsletter.

Rick discussed in more detail some of the items in the handout. He opened with a comment that sixty or seventy years ago, the then current view on the culture of black pines was that they should not be fertilized and only poor soil should be used. This accomplished the objective to keep them small, but it led to impoverished looking trees. The view today is that you should fertilize pines heavily and grow them in first class soil. Keeping them small is brought about mainly by decandling the trees each year. This involves removing the vigorous new shoots (candles) late in the spring. The tree responds by sending out several new shoots, but these are smaller and the needles are also smaller than the first growth of spring. Surplus shoots are removed in the fall as well as the old needles.

Decandling is very time specific. In cooler areas it can be done in mid-June to allow time for growth of new shoots in the remainder of the year. In warmer areas where the pines grow more vigorously, decandling can be delayed until as late as mid-July. If done too late in the year regardless of the area, the tree frequently responds by not sending out any new shoots, meaning that you would have to wait for next year to continue with your development of the tree. After decandling, the tree is not fertilized for four to six weeks to allow a recovery period. After this time, fertilization can resume.

When purchasing a tree, look for robust growth and good bark. The best strategy for dealing with a weaker tree is to simply let it grow and fertilize it heavily. When the pine is growing vigorously it can then be worked on, although this may take as long as a year or more.

Rick recommends feeding pines once a week with fish emulsion and once a month with Miracid, a readily available water soluble fertilizer. Rick also uses solid fertilizer which is placed in tea bags. He fills the bags with mixtures of cottonseed meal and bone meal. Incorporation of blood meal poses problems and is avoided. The bags are then placed on the soil around the tree. The advantage of the solid fertilizer is that it can be removed when you want to stop fertilization such as after decandling, or with approaching winter when fertilization is reduced because the trees are growing very slowly, if at all.

Winter is the time for heavy pruning or repotting. The tree should not be repotted and heavily pruned in the same year, since each is stressful to the tree, and the tree needs time to recover. The tree should be repotted before the warm weather of spring occurs. This allows the roots to recover and start their growth.

Pines require somewhat deeper pots than deciduous trees do. The reason is that conifers in general produce roots in layers and need the deeper space. Also pines are sensitive to standing water and excess water drains more quickly and more completely in deeper pots.



When grown from seed, pines tend to grow a tap root which is a single root which buries itself straight down into the soil. The presence of a tap root makes the tree difficult to pot in a relatively flat bonsai pot. One would like to have the roots spread out laterally from the trunk rather than plunging deep into the soil. Rick suggested a novel way to make this happen. Pine seeds are planted and the seedlings are allowed to grow to a couple of inches in height. The seedlings are then cut off above the soil line, and the portion left in the soil is

discarded. The top is treated as a cutting and placed in sand to root. The root structure of the new tree is then spread out from the trunk, making the tree ideal for growing as a bonsai. Rick speculated that the new tree would be ready for styling in about four years.

Rick's program provided a much needed review of all that we need to know about black pine culture. Thanks, Rick

Spot light

This month the spot light is focused on Bev Martinez who is diligently working on improving our web site. To understand the magnitude of Bev's contribution to EBBS, you need to know a bit of history. Although some of the details have been lost in the mists of time, the story goes like this.



Back in prehistoric times (about 10 years ago, more or less) wise people on the board of directors recognized that the club needed a web site, partly to attract new members and partly because everyone else was doing it and it seemed to be a good thing to do. While it seemed to be a good idea, constructing a web site required technical expertise which no one then in the club had. A techie-type person was contacted and he supplied a web site and so, simple as that, the club joined the twenty first century. The web site was state of the art at the time. It was nice to look at and had all the basic information such as where we met, what the club was about, and people to contact for further questions. There was one little problem. No one then in the club knew how to access the web site to update the information on the site, such as new contact information or to list the election of new officers at the beginning of the New Year. As for listing current programs, forget it. As a result the information on the web site became terribly dated and stale.

After a number of years struggling with our web site, Jeff Clarkson arrived on his charging white horse to rescue the club from the dilemma of how to get our current information to the rest of the world, and particularly to interest potential new members in the club. With some assistance from Michael Hylton, he designed a splendid web site which was beautiful, accessible and was packed with information. The web site was so good, in fact, that it was voted the best web site of all the clubs belonging to the Golden State Bonsai Federation. Jeff left the club to pursue business opportunities, but he left the web site in the capable hands of Michael Hylton who has keep it up to date and also has tweaked it to reflect current issues. His stewardship was so outstanding that the web site was again voted the best web site in GSBF. His care and

attention to the web site has shown the rest of GSBF what a good web site manager can accomplish when he has a first class web site to work with.

At this point, enter Bev. The board of directors is aware that technology is moving very quickly, and asked the question whether the web site can be improved to reflect the current state of the art, in spite of having won best in the state for two years. Bev stepped forward and said that she could do it. She is currently hard at work providing the art work and information presentation on a new site. Her son is also helping with some of the technical details. From preliminary work presented to the board, it appears that Bev will succeed in making our award winning web site even better. The club owes Bev a big thank you for her efforts.

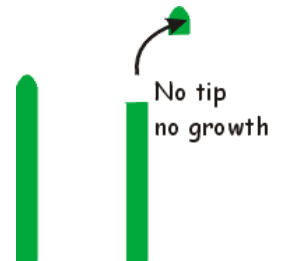
Survey

The Board of Directors is committed to making membership in the East Bay Bonsai Society a rewarding and enjoyable experience. To be sure that our club is heading in the right direction, the board is conducting a survey of the membership to see what we are doing that meets your expectations, and what areas could be improved to better serve your needs and interests. The survey can be found online at <http://bit.ly/EBBS2016>. For those receiving printed copies of the newsletter, you may complete the survey online, but if needed, a printed copy of the survey is attached to this newsletter for you to complete and mail to our club secretary, Lisa Harper, at 157 Kimberlin Heights Dr, Oakland, CA 94619. The survey includes not only your view of the strengths and weaknesses of the society, but also solicits your suggestions for new activities for the club. The survey is an opportunity for your voice to be heard. Do take a moment to give the Board of Directors your thoughts.

Auxins

Sometimes we do things with our bonsai which have a major effect on how our bonsai grow, but we do not know the mechanics of how what we do really works. As an example, pinching the tips of bonsai branches is used to make compact trees. The reason it works involves some interesting chemistry. As a place to start, imagine that you have gone to your favorite nursery and bought a Juniper. You then planted it in your yard and watched it grow. The juniper wants to please you by growing really big really quickly and it does this by allowing each of the branches to grow long. As a matter of fact it does this by devoting all the energy of the plant into lengthening branches, and not spending much energy in side branches. Most rapidly growing plants do exactly the same thing.

But wait a minute, we want that same juniper, if it is to be grown as a bonsai, to be compact with lots of side branches. We accomplish this by removing the tips of the branches. This has two effects. First, it prevents the



branch from growing any longer. Second, it encourages the growth of buds along the branch to sprout and grow into side branches. This leads to a question as to why pinching the growing tips lead to the growth of these buds into side branches or, conversely, what keeps these buds dormant when the branch is allowed to continue to grow longer. It does this by an amazing bit of chemistry. The plant manufactures chemicals called auxins in the growing tips of branches. They slowly migrate down the stem and suppress the growth of side branches. When you pinch the tip of the branch, you remove both the source of more auxins as well as the highest concentration of existing auxins and, since the auxins have been severely reduced, the buds can now grow into side branches.

But wait, there is more to the story. Studies in plants not grown as bonsai have indicated that these plants, when rapidly growing, should produce plenty of auxins in their growing tips, but they also produce lots of side branches. A careful look at these plants shows that sugars produced by photosynthesis can overwhelm the bad effects of the auxins. The conclusion of these studies should also extend to our bonsai. When we pinch the tips of the branches, this reduces the amount of auxin in the branch. Further, we should only pinch when the tree is actively growing and the supply of sugars is at a maximum. The two together should produce a nicely compact tree for you.

Bonsai are basically very slow growing plants and not a lot happens on a month to month basis. This gives us a lot of time to philosophize about how our plants are growing and should be treated. This leads to many schools of thought about any given subject. Pinching is no exception. One school of thought is that as soon as the growing tip of a branch emerges, it should be promptly removed. The other school says that the branch should be allowed to grow well past the length that you want and then cut back a bit shorter than the final length. Which school is right? They both are and the difference is what you are trying to accomplish. If you are trying to develop a pad, then you want a sturdy underlying branch structure to support the pad. Allowing the branch to grow makes the branch thicker, and when the branch is cut back the thicker remaining part is an important part of the developing pad. Once the basic structure of the pad has formed, pinching the tips of the emerging branches leads to a pad with full foliage.

Shiver me timbers!

These scallywags were seen at the Pirate Festival in Vallejo. Them's got shifty eyes! Keep a powerful watch on your booty!



Bonsai Instruction at Merritt College

The workshops at Merritt College are held only when the college is in session. Because the campus is closed for the summer, there will be no workshops until the fourth Monday of August when they will again resume.

Roster Updates

Please update Joe Byrd's phone number to just his cell phone, 831-320-5177.

Bonsai Calendar

- Watering – Water regularly. Don't over-water defoliated trees.
- Fertilizing – Continue regular feeding, but stop fertilizing decandled pines.
- Repotting – Not recommended at this time except for tropical and semi-tropical trees.
- Styling/Pruning – Avoid drastic pruning. Wire uprising branches on quince, ume, oaks, etc. Prune excessive growth on trees.
- Insect and disease control – Maintain defensive treatments for fungus. Watch for and treat insect infestations.

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.

August 6 – 7, San Francisco, San Francisco Suiseki Kai: 35th Annual Suiseki Exhibit at the Union Bank Community Room, Japan Center, 1675 Post Street. Show hours are 10 AM – 5 PM Saturday and 11 AM – 5 PM Sunday. Show coincides with the 43rd annual Nihonmachi Street Fair, so come early and enjoy your day in San Francisco's historic Japantown. Suiseki and stone sales. For more information about our club, contact sfsuisekikai@gmail.com or visit <http://sfsuisekikai.wordpress.com>.

August 20 – 21, Santa Rosa, Redwood Empire Bonsai Society (REBS): 33rd Annual show at the Santa Rosa Veterans Memorial Building, 1351 Maple Avenue. Show hours are 10 AM to 5 PM on Saturday and 10 AM to 4 PM on Sunday with demonstration by Bonsai Master Artist Kathy Shaner from 1 to 3 PM both days. Demo trees will be raffled. See the largest bonsai exhibition. Large bonsai vendor and member sales. Exciting silent auctions or "buy it now". Free refreshments by the Bonsai

café. Free admission and parking. For more information visit our website www.rebsbonsai.org or contact Bob Shimon at (707) 884-4126 or shimon@mcn.org.

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.

Wanted to Buy (or for free)

East Bay Bonsai Society—Schedule for 2016
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Regular Meetings: Second Wednesday, every month (except August and October) @ 7:30 pm

Place: Lakeside Garden Center, 666 Bellevue Avenue, Oakland.

Visitors welcome.

Website for Bonsai Garden Lake Merritt: www.gsbflakemerritt.org/

Meeting Program

July 13	EBBS Auction
Aug 28	BGLM Introduction to Bonsai – John Nackley
Sept 14	Oaks - John Thompson
Sept 25	BGLM Introduction to Bonsai – Janet Nelson
Oct 23	BGLM Introduction to Bonsai – Don Meeker
Nov 9	Juniper Jubilee - Mike Pistello
Nov 27	BGLM Introduction to Bonsai – Tom Colby
Dec 14	Holiday Party

Special Events

Aug 20 Potluck

Oct 8-9 Show
