



The Tree Shrinker

Volume XXXXV, No. 9

A MONTHLY BULLETIN

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East Bay Bonsai Society

September Meeting: September 14, 2016 @ 7:30 p.m.

President's Note

We're half way through the year and what does that mean? That means our successful auction is behind us and now our new focus is on our annual October show. The show is everyone's opportunity to showcase all of the hard work that you've put into your trees. Everyone should consider showing at least one tree. It's also a chance to further support our club by donating items for our sales area (there's also a consignment option).

It was great seeing everyone at the potluck and thanks everyone for contributing great dishes.

Michael

September Meeting

We are fortunate to have John Thompson as our presenter for the September meeting. John has given several presentations to EBBS in the past and all have been well received. Not only is he an accomplished bonsai artist but also he is an excellent teacher. His special passion is Oaks, the subject of the evening's program.

The native species of Oaks make splendid bonsai, but don't always get the recognition that they deserve. John serves as an ardent advocate of Oaks as bonsai. In past programs, John has brought examples of Oak bonsai so you could see the potential that Oaks offer. If you do not have at least one Oak bonsai in your collection of trees, John's presentation will open your eyes to new possibilities. We look forward to another fine program from John.



John occasionally sells trees from his home in San Jose. He will not offer trees for sale at the meeting, but if you are intrigued by his program and are lusting for an Oak, you might discuss with him at the meeting what he may have available for sale.

October Show



Because the show is in the same week as our regular meeting, the October meeting is canceled so that you will have time to prepare for the show. Now is the time to be looking at your collection and selecting which trees you would like to display. The EBBS board hopes that everyone will display at least one tree. Your best tree or trees will be most welcome regardless of whether it is a humble Juniper or a spectacular finished bonsai. Each and every tree in the show makes a contribution to the overall success of the show.

Now is also the time to be sure that the pot compliments the tree and that you have a stand for the tree. If not, there are usually extra stands available at the show setup, but bear in mind that they may not do your tree full justice.

If you haven't already signed up to help with the show, do so at the September meeting. If you wish to reserve a tokonoma, either sign up for one at the next meeting or contact Janice Dilbeck at janicedilbeck@comcast.net.

August Potluck

The August potluck was held across the street from the home of Rick and Janet Nelson. It was a wonderful event which gave the members the chance to socialize with one another. The weather was pleasantly warm, the collection of bonsai was breathtaking, and the food was superb.



If your idea of a potluck dinner comes from the times when everybody's mother prepared her favorite version of rubber chicken for the elementary school benefit, you

were in for a surprise. The meal demonstrated once again that EBBS has some very talented cooks.

The best part of the day was the gracious hospitality of the hosts. The club owes Rick and Janet a big thank you not only for hosting the potluck this year, but for the many times they have done it in the past.

The Fungus Among Us

Conventional wisdom says that all living things are either plants or animals. As is frequently the case, conventional wisdom falls a bit short. Sitting somewhere between plants and animals are a huge



number of living things and fungi fall into this category. In fact, the kingdom of fungi is so big that it has many more species than does either the plant or the animal kingdom. Fungi are all around us and some fungi do us good. For example, yeasts are fungi and they are responsible for good things like beer and bread. Some are less good like, for example, athlete's foot which is caused by a fungus.

The role of fungi in the large order of things is to break down tissue from either plants or animals into small segments that can be used as nutrients for the next generation. They are the ultimate recyclers or are garbage men, depending on your point of view. Unfortunately, they sometimes try to break down things that we are not ready to have broken down.

Many different members of the vast fungus kingdom can affect our bonsai, and as a result, the symptoms of a fungus infection can be widely diverse. The most usual indication of a fungus problem is spots on the leaves of deciduous trees.



This can range from a single leaf, to severe spotting on most of the leaves. And when this happens, it can be a prelude to loss of the plant.

Powdery mildew can be a problem especially with maples.

A type of blight that attacks landscape junipers and pine trees is active in the bay area. This appears to be spread by insects and will cause loss of the tree if it is not treated promptly. A symptom of this blight is dieback of individual branches starting at the tips, and the dead foliage on the dead branch is an orangey brown color.



The various organisms that cause root rot in bonsai are not technically fungi, but they miss the cut by a subtle difference that is really only of interest to microbiologists who are interested in taxonomy. So for our purposes, they can be lumped with fungi.

Treatment of fungi differs from treatment of insect problems in at least three ways. The fungi are within the tree whereas insects are for the most part on the outside of the tree where they can be contacted by insecticides. Because the fungi are living inside the tree, they are hard to reach with fungicides because the fungicide must penetrate the tree to be effective.

The biology of most insects is pretty much the same for all species, so any insecticide will usually have at least some effect on any bug, ranging from effective control to at least making them angry. Fungi are a large family of beasts and each member of the family has very different biology and, as a result, any single fungicide may offer good control of your particular problem or may have no effect.

The third difference is that insects fly or crawl from branch to branch. Contact of a branch with bugs with a non-infested branch usually does not lead to immediate spreading of the problem. Fungi are spread by spores, and contact of a diseased leaf with a fresh leaf is all it takes to spread the problem to the new leaf.

The most effective way to control fungal problems is to practice good hygiene. Promptly remove fallen leaves from your trees. The blight infecting conifers is particularly contagious. A great way to speed the fungus throughout the tree is to clip off contaminated dead branches and then trim uninfected branches. The clippers will spread the fungus. If you are working on an infected tree, frequently disinfect your clippers by dipping them in alcohol or a weak peroxide solution. Powdery mildew can be caused by watering late in the day, allowing the foliage to remain wet overnight.

In the case of insect problems, you have a choice of using a product from a group of relatively safe insecticides or from a group of harsh chemicals. In the case of fungal problems, the choices are pretty much limited to harsh chemicals.

Horticultural copper sprays work and are probably the least toxic of the available products. Cleary 3336, available from Amazon, is more effective than the copper formulation and also



more toxic. It is reputed to be systemic which means that it is absorbed by the tree and can potentially deal with the fungus in its' home turf inside the tree.

If you are only interested in nontoxic and environmentally gentle means of controlling fungus infections, the world of organic gardening offers a possible nontoxic means of controlling fungi. Some of these folks maintain that on each living plant there is a balance between good microbes and bad microbes. If you have a leaf spotting problem caused by fungi, it is due to an imbalance of the microbes. They claim that you can restore the balance by added good microbes to the tree.



the foliage.

You do this by soaking compost in water which allegedly creates a lot of good microbes, and then decanting the liquid from the solids and spraying the solution on

This procedure is currently being used at the University of California Botanical Garden to improve the health of their collection with apparent good results, but are they really good results? Since there is no easy way to objectively measure the value of this procedure by use of controlled experiments where the effect of spraying can be compared with similar plants which are not sprayed, the question remains just how effective this procedure really is. It is certainly safe and nontoxic.

Literature from England in the nineteenth century indicates that greenhouse plants were then regularly manured. This is a fertilization scheme which involves soaking cow manure in water, decanting the liquid and using it to fertilize plants. Presumably this procedure also generates a lot of good microbes. If you are an experimentalist at heart, you could combine restoring the microbe balance procedure and fertilize your plants in one move by drenching your plants with the cow manure concoctions. If you do this and have good results, let us know and, by the way, don't forget to compare your results with the control plants which are treated with the fertilizer.

Bonsai Instruction at Merritt College

Instruction is in the form of workshops and is a splendid opportunity to learn how to develop your trees into first class bonsai. In these workshops you work on your own tree under the guidance of an experienced bonsai artist. The workshops are open to all experience levels and are usually held at 7:00 pm on the fourth Monday of each month when the college is in session.

The meetings are in the Landscape Horticulture Building at Merritt College which is located in the Oakland hills off Redwood Road. The workshops are free, except for a small parking fee. Leading the workshops are two members of EBBS, Bill Castellon and Randal Lee. You can contact Bill at 510-569-8003 or Randall at 510-846-0841.

Bonsai Calendar

- Sun – gradually move shaded deciduous trees into sun to promote fall color.
- Watering – Water regularly, but don't over-water.
- Fertilizing – Use low or zero nitrogen fertilizers.
- Repotting – Begin repotting redwood, shimpaku and quince after mid-month. Begin repotting flowering and fruiting varieties of prunus.
- Styling/Pruning – Remove seed pods and dry fruit. Do not wire deciduous trees until leaves drop. Renew pinching junipers and severely prune one last time this season.
- Insect and disease control – Maintain defensive treatments for fungus. Remove dead plant material. Watch for and treat insect infestations.
- Propogating/Collecting – Last opportunity to take hardwood cuttings from deciduous trees. Last opportunity to remove air-layers this year.

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.

September 17, Placerville, Gold Country Bonsai Club: 2nd Annual Show at Rainbow Orchards, 2569 Larsen Drive, Camino, the lovely Apple Hill destination at El Dorado County, known for its apple cider doughnuts. Show hours are 10 AM – 4 PM with Bonsai Clinic to be held by club members. Renowned bonsai trees and suiseki by renowned member collectors will be exhibited. For more information, contact Scott Chadd at (530) 622-9681 or scottchadd@lotusbonsai.com, or check their website at www.goldcountrybonsaiclub.com.

September 24 – 25, Penryn, Sierra Bonsai Club: Annual Show at the Placer Buddhist Church, 3192 Boyington Road, in conjunction with the 52nd Annual Food Bazaar. Show hours are 11 AM – 5 PM Saturday and 11 AM – 4 PM Sunday. Bonsai demonstration will be held in the temple both days, along with other cultural events throughout the day. It is a yearly celebration for the whole family to enjoy. For more information, contact Lucy Sakaishi-Judd (916) 300-8103

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 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.gsbf-lakemerritt.org/

Meeting **Program**

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

Oct 8-9 Show
