



The Tree Shrinker

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A MONTHLY BULLETIN

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East Bay Bonsai Society

Meeting: May 10, 2017 7:30 PM

May Program



May is a special month on the bonsai calendar because, with a little cooperation from the weather, the azaleas are in full bloom. The program in May will celebrate this event with a presentation on azaleas by our very own Bob Gould. Bob has been a member of EBBS for many years and is an accomplished grower of azaleas. Azaleas require somewhat different cultural conditions than most

bonsai, and as a result, some people have difficulty growing them to perfection. Bob will tell us what we need to know to be successful with these beautiful trees.

Bob is specially qualified to speak on this subject because he is a graduate of a full, year long course on azaleas offered by Mr. Gondo, a well-known Japanese bonsai artist who is considered to be the last word in azalea management and culture in Japan. Bob has also visited Mr. Gondo's nursery in Japan for workshops there.

Blooming azaleas are clearly the most spectacular plants that bonsai has to offer, and Bob's talk will give an excellent introduction to the annual show by the local azalea club. A discussion about the show is presented elsewhere in this newsletter.

Thanks in advance to Pat Cahill, Polly Gould and Bev Martinez for offering to provide refreshments for the meeting.

June program

EBBS will have a garden party for the June meeting, and who doesn't love a party? The party will take place in the bonsai garden with a behind-the-scenes tour led by EBBS members who are very involved in the operation of the garden. There will be short presentations by our very own Bob Gould and

Rick Trumm. Several new projects to upgrade the facilities have been completed, and these will be a focus of the tour, as well as spotlighting some of the trees in the collection.

We will meet at the garden center, and then proceed to the bonsai garden for the tour. When darkness falls, we will retire back to the garden center for a presentation by George Haas, who is currently the Marketing Manager for the garden. He will touch on future projects, as well as volunteer opportunities at the garden.



April Program

The April program was a presentation by Bev Martinez on pots. Bev introduced the program by handing each member a small piece of clay, saying that you cannot appreciate the experience of pot making without knowing the tactile properties of clay first hand. You have to feel the clay. Talk about hands on! The simplest form of pot can be made by pinching the little lumps of clay into the shape of a pot, appropriately called a pinch pot.

Bev elaborated on the different types of finished clay pots as defined by the temperature to which the pot is fired. Earthenware is fired to a relatively low temperature (less than 1950 degrees Fahrenheit), and is usually somewhat porous. Think basic flower pots. Earthenware

pots intended for bonsai are usually glazed to make them nonporous. The first ceramics made were earthenware, and examples as old as 25,000 BCE are known.

The next type is stoneware which is fired to higher temperatures (between 1950 and 2380 degrees). Most bonsai pots are stoneware and are not porous.

The third type of ceramic is porcelain which is fired to very high temperatures (2380 to 2600 degrees). A very few small bonsai pots are made of porcelain.

Each type of ceramic requires unique clay compositions. Also, the glaze used must be compatible with the firing temperature of the clay.

A nonobvious feature of pot making is that shrinkage can occur between the original wet clay form to the completed fired pot. This can be up to six percent in earthenware, and as much as a whopping twenty percent in stoneware. The potential shrinkage must be taken into account both in designing the pot and in the construction of the pot.

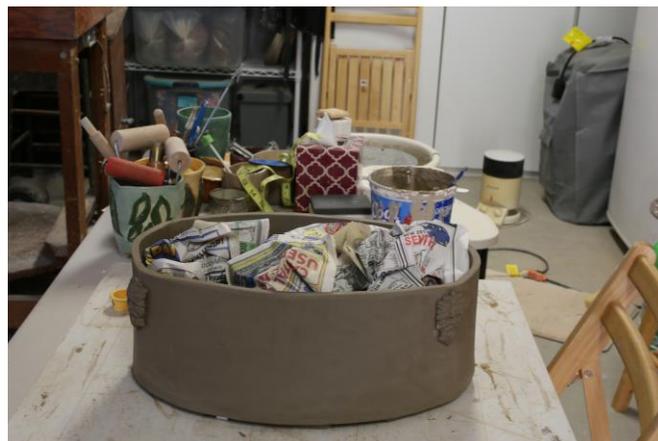


Bev then showed a number of the tools used in making pots, ranging from a simple piece of plastic, called a rib, to major tools including wheels and slab rollers.

To show how easy it is to make a pot, she recruited Julie Holcomb and Ernie Katler from the audience to make a coiled pot. Both easily produced good quality pots. Finally, she demonstrated how to make a larger pot using the coil technique.



For the final section of her talk, Bev showed a number of images of the progress she made building a



large pot. The story ended on a sad note when she mentioned that after all her work in making the pot, it cracked when it was fired. This pointed out the challenges and pleasures of pot making. You never quite know what you will get until you see the final fired piece.

The enthusiasm that Bev showed for pot making made for a fun and informative evening, and certainly encouraged members to attend Bev's pot making workshop the following weekend. Thanks Bev for a great program.

Field trip

For the past several years, EBBS has sponsored a field trip for the club, and this year is no exception. EBBS is planning a field trip on Saturday, May 13, to visit two local nurseries.



The first stop will be to the garden of Jonas Dupuich. Those who attended the recent EBBS program given by Jonas saw six of his trees, including some true masterpieces. All were fine examples of just how good bonsai trees can be. Visiting his garden will give you a wonderful opportunity to see a collection of very notable bonsai, and a chance to chat with the artist who created them. Jonas also sells trees, pots and tools.

The second stop is in Hayward at the bonsai nursery operated by Johnny Uchida. The nursery has been open since the 1970's, and is one of the landmarks in the local bonsai world.

Johnny has been the sensei (teacher) for the Yamato bonsai club since it was founded in the early

1970's, and has also given introductory classes in bonsai in adult education programs for many years. These classes, as well as membership in the Yamato bonsai club, were the starting point in bonsai for many people currently in the local bonsai community, including some EBBS members.

The nursery is always well stocked with trees which range all the way from inexpensive starter material to finished bonsai. There will also be all the supplies you need for your bonsai, from pots to tools to potting materials. There will be lots to see at both stops.

The trip will start by assembling at the Encinal Nursery in Alameda at 9:30 am. Since the nursery is open for business and Saturday is a big day for them, please do not park in front of the nursery. If lost, Jonas's phone number is 510-915-2025. The group will then go to Jonas's garden which is located adjacent to the nursery. At the conclusion of this visit, the group will have lunch at a Chinese restaurant in the Hayward area. After lunch, the group will visit with Johnny at his Grove Way Bonsai nursery, located at 1239 Grove Way, Hayward, phone number 510-537-1157. For those wishing to join the field trip in the afternoon, the group expects to arrive at the nursery about 1:00 pm.

The trip will be an action-packed day filled with fun and bonsai. Save the day, May 13, for this special event. See you there!

Azalea show



On Saturday and Sunday, May 20 and 21, the Bay Area Satsuki Aikokai is having an azalea show at the garden center. Azaleas are very different from other bonsai in many respects. Most other well done bonsai display an understated elegance. You have to look carefully at the tree, and only slowly do you become aware of all its splendid features. In contrast, azaleas in full bloom are eye dazzlers which hit you right between the eyes because the trees are literally covered with large and bright flowers. They are so covered with

flowers, in fact, that you frequently can't even see the structure of the tree. As a result, azaleas are occasionally shown in Japan in the fall when the trees are not in bloom so the structure of the tree can be seen and appreciated.

A room full of blooming azaleas is a sight that can challenge many shows featuring non-bonsai plants, including orchids, for sheer beauty and impact. In addition to the azalea display at the show, there will be a silent auction and plant sale featuring both beginner material and Japanese imported plants.

Do make an effort to see this spectacular show. All the necessary details of the show can be found in the *Events by Others* section of this newsletter. The satsuki club has a web site which can be visited at <http://satukiazaleabonsai.org>. For even more show information, contact George Haas at gwhass@comcast.net.

GRO Fund

The bonsai garden has launched an ambitious project to raise money for both garden improvements and replacement of worn facilities. The project is labeled Garden Revitalization Project, GRO for short. A complete list of projects covered by GRO is listed on the garden web site, <http://gsbf-lakemerritt.org>. The list is long and, as you can imagine, a lot of money is required to fund GRO, one hundred thousand dollars to be exact. About one quarter of the funds are in hand, but there is still a long way to go. If you have not already donated to GRO, please consider doing so. Any amount would be appreciated, and donations can be easily made on the garden web site. GRO ensures that the garden will continue to be there for our education and enjoyment for a long time into the future.

Donald Trump's Hair Style

You are the graduate of one of EBBS's acclaimed wiring workshops and are now ready to wire the dickens out of any poor unsuspecting bush that crosses your path. The big question facing you is, what should the emerging bonsai look like? On a deeper level, what differentiates a good bonsai from a so-so bonsai?

A fine bonsai is the result of a process that you may not have thought about, but provides the answer you need to create an outstanding bonsai. A clear and perhaps a familiar example of this process is, of all places, the editorial page of your newspaper (if you are one of the resilient few who still gets the daily news from a newspaper).

There is usually a cartoon on the editorial page which frequently features a drawing of a person, generally a politician, making a comment on the current scene. The cartoonist needs to be sure that you recognize who the person is, and could choose to identify the person by making the drawing a photographic image. This would require time and skill which the cartoonist may not have. Besides, the focus of the cartoon is the political message, not the art work. Instead, the cartoonist makes a quick and simple sketch of the person. The simple sketch may not clearly identify

the person, so the cartoonist exaggerates distinctive features for an unambiguous identification.

President Trump is now frequently seen in political cartoons, and an example of this process in action is how he is portrayed. Trump has a distinctive hair style, and this is greatly exaggerated when he is featured in a cartoon to clearly identify him as the subject. The process the cartoonist uses can be summarized as *identification by exaggeration of a distinct feature*.



So, what does Trump's hairstyle have to do with bonsai? Both the figure in the cartoon and bonsai are the result of the same process of *exaggeration of distinctive features to identify the subject*. Here is how it works for bonsai.

Take, for example, an old tree growing in a meadow in the Sierras. When the tree was little, perhaps a bear, after a good meal of honey and berries, was sleepy and laid down for a nap. Unfortunately, this was directly on top of the little tree which got squished. As a result, the trunk of the tree is still a little crooked after all these years. A bit later, a severe snow storm overloaded one of the branches and caused it to break. Now the tree is a little lopsided because of the missing branch. Even later, hungry beetles passing by were looking for a nice place to have lunch, spied a branch of the tree, and ate all the bark away from a portion of the branch.

In spite of bears, snow and bugs, the tree is a beautiful sight. The distinctive features of this tree, as well as most trees found in nature, are great age. It is a survivor and it is beautiful. Each of these features is displayed and exaggerated in a quality bonsai.



Trunks of trees in nature become fatter with age, and as a result, old trees have fat trunks. Age is shown on bonsai by fat trunks which are disproportionately large for the height of the tree.

Survival is shown on conifers by dead branches and shari on the trunk which indicates that the tree is a survivor.



For deciduous trees, an unblemished trunk and branches suggest that the tree is unfazed by the assaults of all that nature can throw at it. The beauty of the natural tree is exemplified by placing every branch on the bonsai perfectly. Nature is not always so meticulous when placing branches on a tree.

You can look at a well done political cartoon and can identify without difficulty the person who is the subject. In the same way, you can look at a superb bonsai and are easily reminded of a tree that you have seen in the past, even though the bonsai is an exaggeration of what you remember. This is how bonsai works, and this is the target that you are aiming for when you attempt to create a fine bonsai out of that bush you have been eying.

Bonsai Calendar

- Watering – Water regularly to keep root ball moist, not wet, and never dry.
- Fertilizing – Start regular feeding of deciduous trees after first flush of growth is completed. Continue regular feeding of conifers.
- Repotting – Not recommended at this time.
- Styling/Pruning – Rotate trees. Watch for wire cutting during this period of fast growth. Start defoliation. Shorten branches on fruiting trees. Pinch junipers, spruces and cedars.
- Air Layering – Deciduous trees may be air layered if new growth has hardened.
- 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.

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. There is a gate across the road leading to the parking lot that will automatically open when you pull up close to it. 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.

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

May 6 - 7, Sacramento, Sacramento Bonsai Club: 71st Annual Bonsai & Suiseki Show at the Buddhist Church of Sacramento, 2401 Riverside Blvd. Show hours are Noon - 5 PM on Saturday and 10 AM - 4 PM on Sunday with demonstration at 2 PM each day. Demonstration by Sam Adina, followed by the demo raffle and more prizes. Free Admission. For more information contact Lucy Sakaishi-Judd at juddbonsai@att.net or visit sacramentobonsaiclub.com

May 20 - 21, Sacramento, Satsuki Aikokai of Sacramento: Annual Bonsai Show will be held at the Shepard Garden Center, 3330 McKinley Blvd. Hours are Saturday 10 AM – 5PM, and 10 AM – 4PM, with demonstrations at 1 PM on both days by Yuzo Maruyama. Class "Create your own flowering azalea bonsai" at 11 AM daily with class fee \$20. Satsuki information booth, vendors, raffles, etc. For more information contact Ronn Pigram at (916) 428-8505 or satsukiaikokaisac@sbcglobal.net.

May 20 - 21, Palo Alto, Akebono Bonsai Club and Kashu Suiseki Kai: 55th and 51st Annual Show held at the Palo Alto Buddhist Temple, 2751 Louis Rd. Show hours are Noon to 5 PM each day with demonstration at 2 PM, followed by demo raffle and

door prizes. Free Admission. For more information contact AkebonoBonsai@gmail.com

May 20-21, Santa Barbara, Bonsai Club of Santa Barbara: Annual Bonsai Exhibition at the Santa Barbara Botanic Garden, 1212 Mission Canyon Road. Hours are Saturday 11 AM - 4 PM and Sunday 10 AM - 4 PM with demonstrations at 1 PM both days. Plant sale by the Club. Native plants suitable for bonsai in the Botanic Garden's nursery. Books and other gifts in the Garden Shop. For more information, contact Joe Olson 805-964-0869, email joeyuccaseed@verizon.net, or visit www.santabarbarabonsai.org.

May 20 - 21, Oakland, Bay Area Satsuki Aikokai (BASA): 22nd Annual Satsuki Azalea Bonsai Show at the Lakeside Park Garden Center, Lake Merritt, 666 Bellevue Avenue. Show hours are 10 AM - 5 PM Saturday and 10 AM - 4 PM Sunday. Featuring Bonsai Satsuki Azaleas in full flower bloom! Expert demonstration on styling, educational forums all day, member sales with beginner & Japan imported material, Vendors, Silent auctions, free admission, and public parking available. For more information, contact George Haas at gwhaas@comcast.net or visit our website <http://satsukiazaleabonsai.org/>.

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 2017 - 2018

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**

May 10 Satsuki Azaleas – Bob Gould

Jun 14 Romp in the Garden – Bob Gould and Rick Trumm

Jul 12 Auction

Sep 13 Accent Plants – The Judds

Nov 8 tbd – Randal Lee

Dec 13 Holiday Dinner

Jan 10 Styling Raft Hornbeam - Part 3 – Kathy Shaner

Special Events

May 13 Field Trip to Jonas's Garden and Grove Way Bonsai Nursery

Oct 14-15 Show with Peter Tea as our Headliner
