



The Tree Shrinker

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A MONTHLY BULLETIN

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East Bay Bonsai Society

Meeting: April 11, 2018 7:30 PM

April Program

The April program will feature Bob Shimon who will discuss and demonstrate the use of redwoods as bonsai. He is an expert on how to grow and style redwoods and, as he will reveal, these trees require somewhat different treatment from the usual bonsai material. Bob has been active in bonsai for many years and has also been a mover and shaker for the Redwood Empire Bonsai Society. You may have seen him at shows where he frequently appears selling primarily redwoods.

In the distant past, Bob presented a program on redwoods to EBBS that was very well received, and we look forward to his return visit. It is possible that Bob will be selling trees at the meeting. He has selected a fine redwood for his demonstration and, as you can see from the pictures, it will make a splendid bonsai. It will be raffled at the end of his demonstration and just think, it could be yours for the price of a single raffle ticket.



Please bring your redwoods to the meeting. As a special treat, Bob will do a critique of your tree to help you continue to refine it.

Thanks in advance to Janet and Rick Trumm, Ron Sanchez, and Sunnie Youk for offering to bring refreshments to the meeting.

May Program

The May meeting will feature Peter Tea who will use a large trident maple for his demonstration. Peter is a local bonsai artist who spent several years in Japan fine tuning his skills. While there he published a blog of his activities which many of us not only enjoyed but found to be a fine learning experience. Since his return, he is now leading workshops and gives demonstrations for a number of clubs locally as well as nationally. He was the headliner for our recent show, and those who attended his demonstration know both that he is a fine speaker, and his insights into bonsai are extremely valuable.



March Program

The March program featured Gordon Deeg discussing tool maintenance with emphasis on sharpening. His stated purpose was to encourage people to spend more time sharpening their tools.

Sharpening has received scant attention in the past, and some of the published information is in conflict. To further fussy up the picture, there are a lot of different equipment available for sharpening.



Many types of stones are available including oil stones, Japanese water stones (both natural as well as manmade), and diamond stones. The stones require a lubricant to prevent the metal particles that are removed from clogging up the pores of the stone. Amazingly enough,

water stones and oil stones require water and light oil, respectively. Diamond stones can be used without a lubricant, but at some risk of clogging the pores of the stone. It is better to use a lubricant which can be water, light oil or a special lapping oil. They all work. Generally, diamond stones are coarser grit and are used when relatively large amounts of metal are removed as, for example, when you want to remove a nick in the blade or when the blade is very dull.

Gordon emphasized that when it comes to sharpening, it is not the journey but the destination that counts. If the tool is sharp that is all that matters. Fortunately, all of the types of stone and the assorted lubricants applicable to each type of stone work well and can produce a razor-sharp blade.

The first step in sharpening a tool is to remove the gunk and crud from the blade with a rust eraser or solvent such as paint thinner which works great on pine pitch. The gunk can plug up the pores on the stone which reduces the ability of the stone to sharpen the blade.

Gordon demonstrated how to sharpen tools starting with a single blade (a knife), then a double-bladed tool (scissors) and final more complex double-bladed tools (diagonal cutters).

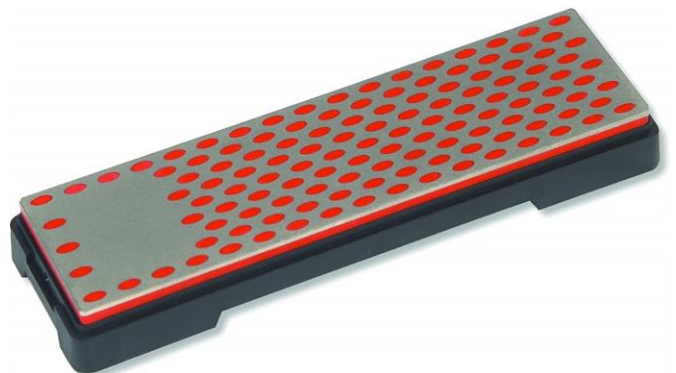
Most Japanese knives are beveled on one side. Sharpening takes place by putting the beveled side of the blade on the stone, and alternately pushing and pulling the blade back and forth. The blade is pressed down on the stone only on the pull stroke. Pressing down on the push stroke can risk gouging the stone and developing a curve on the blade which would, for example, not allow scissors to close properly. This is continued until a slight burr can be felt on the flat side of the knife. The burr is removed with a few strokes on the flat side of the knife. The edge on the knife is as sharp as it can get using that particular stone. If a keener edge is required you must then go to a stone with a finer grit. The ultimate edge can be obtained by using a leather strop charged with a stropping compound. Here it is particularly important that only the pull stroke be used to prevent gouging and cutting the leather with a push stroke.



Scissors are sharpened exactly the same way as described for a knife. Each blade of the scissors is beveled on one side and this is the side to sharpen. The sharp blades must meet for the scissors to cut, therefore, do not try to sharpen the inside of the blade other than to remove the slight burr. Raising the stone on a short wooden block is very helpful so the side of the scissors that you are not sharpening won't get in the way.

Tools with complex edges such as concave cutters and diagonal cutters have a singular similarity in that the blades close with one blade slightly past the other. Both blades are beveled with the outer blade beveled on the outside and the inner blade beveled on the inside. Only the respective bevels should be sharpened so the blades can close properly. Diagonal cutters are the easiest to sharpen, although it requires a bit of gymnastics to be sure that each bevel is on the stone. Curved blades are a challenge, requiring not only gymnastics but also specialized equipment for the inside blade such as a diamond rat file or a ceramic cylinder.

Gordon recommended a basic sharpening tool kit. A water stone with a coarse grit on one side and a fine grit on the other is ideal. A combination stone with one thousand grit on one side and six thousand grit on the other is relatively inexpensive and will serve for most needs. A six hundred grit diamond stone is helpful for very dull or nicked blades, and lastly, a leather strop completes the package.





There a veritable plethora of suppliers of sharpening equipment. *American Bonsai Tools and Supply Company*, *Japan Woodworker* and *Woodcraft* all sell on line. *Hida Tool and Hardware* located in Berkeley is a local supplier. There are many other equally good suppliers.

Tools frequently require a bit of other maintenance in addition to sharpening. With use the rivets holding the two halves together can work loose. Sometimes the other side on the problem can be seen in new tools, i.e. the rivet is so tight that you can hardly open them. Loose tools are not only annoying, but also the blades can be so far apart that they no longer cut well regardless of how sharp they are. Fortunately, there is an easy fix. The rivets are usually fixed on one side of the tool and are not fixed on the other side.



To fix a loose rivet, place the tool with the nonfixed side of the rivet up on a solid surface the hit the rivet with a hammer which will deform the rivet slightly to tighten the tool. If the rivet is tight, place a couple of washers on a solid surface and place the tool with fixed side up on the washers so that the rivet is over the hole of the washer, and then whack the rivet with a hammer. A single smart rap with the hammer is usually enough to do the trick. Aggressive hammering with a real big hammer can bend the rivet which is disastrous for the tool.

Gordon concluded with an admonition that at the end of each day working on your bonsai clean your tools and coat them with a rust preventative. WD 40 works well as do many others. Store your tools carefully in a tool roll or a box to prevent damage to sharp blades. Above all, know how to sharpen your tools and keep them sharp. Although he did not express it explicitly, the overarching

theme of Gordon's presentation was that you should treat your tools with respect.

Show and Tell

Show and tell is a regular feature of each meeting which sometimes does not get the attention that it deserves. It is an opportunity for members to show off their bonsai accomplishments, and for members to increase their knowledge about bonsai. The board would like to make show and tell a more vibrant feature of the monthly meetings. Toward this end, you probably noticed at the recent meetings that people bringing in trees were asked to fill out a simple form listing their name as well as the name of the tree. The forms will allow members to contact directly with the growers. Some of the trees will be pictured in the newsletter and the forms will help in identifying the owners of the trees.

Show and Tell at the March Meeting

Spring is here, and during show-and-tell, members shared with us their beautiful deciduous trees.

Bob Gould brought his shohin Potentilla, aged about 72 years.



Tony Saraleno showed us his blooming Weeping Crabapple, about 25 years old.



Bill Castellon showed us his Tomentosa Cherry, about 25 years old.



Bonsai Garden

The bonsai garden at Lake Merritt established a fund last year to upgrade the facilities as well as to replace some of the existing facilities which were worn out such as rotting benches. This is anticipated as a major expenditure with one hundred thousand dollars the estimated cost of all that was planned for the garden. A detailed list of the current objectives can be found on the web site for the garden, www.gsbflakemerritt.org. Funding is in part a donation from a charitable organization, cash donations from individuals and clubs, and finally the purchase of bricks for the pathways, again from individuals and clubs. At the last meeting of the EBBS board the purchase of a brick in the name of the club was approved. The fund is slowly inching upward toward the one hundred-thousand-dollar goal, but there is still a way to go. If you have not already given to the fund or if you would like to increase your donation, mail your check with GRO on the memo line to GSBF Bonsai Garden at Lake Merritt, PO Box 16176, Oakland, CA, 94610. Also, if you would like to purchase a brick in your name the details can be found on the web site of the garden.

Dues

There are a few of us who keep forgetting that the yearly dues for EBBS membership are due. If you fall into this unfortunate category, please tie a string around your finger to remind yourself that the dues should be paid if you wish to continue to enjoy the many benefits of club membership. The yearly dues are \$30 for single memberships and \$40 for couples. Membership includes a subscription to our always entertaining and informative newsletter, The Tree Shrinker, by email. If you would like to have a hard copy sent to you by snail mail there is an additional charge of \$5 to cover the cost of postage. Our treasurer, Pat Cahill, will be delighted to receive your check for dues at the next regular meeting. Dues can also be mailed to:

**HURRY!
HURRY!
HURRY!**

EBBS Treasurer, 4933 Cochrane, Oakland, CA, 94618-2701.

Defoliation

Defoliation means removing some or all of the leaves from your tree. Why in the world would one want to do that? After all, your bonsai is trying the very best it can, and that means having lots of nice leaves. A necessary prelude to the subject of defoliation of deciduous trees is a few thoughts about how these trees grow. Every self-respecting tree wants to grow both tall and wide. It does this by extending its branches in all directions. The tree needs energy to do this, which means more leaves. As the branches grow longer, the canopy of leaves form an outer shell around the tree. Side branches underneath the canopy receive less and less light as the tree grows, and as a result, the inner growth slowly dies due to lack of light, leaving bare branches inside the canopy. This process works great for a landscape tree but can be a disaster for deciduous bonsai because it generates ever longer bare branches. So, what can one do about this? As you might have guessed, the answer is defoliation.



Defoliation of deciduous trees has three possible objectives. The first is to allow sunlight to reach into the interior of the tree which will allow continued growth of the small interior side branches, achieving a fuller tree. The second objective is to achieve balance in the tree. This can be useful when a particular branch is growing a little too rapidly for the design of the tree and relies on the fact that the growth of a branch is slowed when the leaves are removed.



A related issue is that outermost leaves of the canopy receive the most light, and they can become significantly larger than the rest of the leaves. Balance of the tree can be restored by removing only these leaves. The third objective is to increase ramification of the tree. After the removal of leaves, the tree sprouts a flush of growth including activation of dormant buds, and this leads to increased branch structure in the tree.

Defoliation can be considered as soon as the new growth has hardened off after spring growth. This means June, or by the middle of July at the very latest. Leaf removal is definitely scissor work. Pulling the leaves by hand is likely to damage buds at the base of the leaves which defeats the whole idea of what defoliation hopes to accomplish. Leaves are removed by cutting the stalk of the leaf about half way between the blade of the leaf and the branch.



Once the tree has been defoliated, careful management of water is needed. Water normally flows from the soil through the trunk to the leaves where much is then lost by evaporation. If the tree has been defoliated, this water is no longer lost until the new leaves grow, hence the drain of water from the soil is less. All this means that it is easy to overwater defoliated trees. On the other hand, of course be sure that the tree does not dry out. The trunk and roots have been shaded by the leaf canopy and if this is suddenly removed, they are exposed to possible burns by full sunlight. A defoliated tree can be either moved into light shade until the new leaves form, or the trunk and roots can be protected by a towel.

You may wish to only slow the growth of a branch, but do not wish to encourage activation of the buds on the branch. In this case, the leaf itself is trimmed back by about one half of the area of the leaf rather than cutting the whole leaf off.

A requirement for any tree before defoliation can be considered is that the tree be in robust good health. If the tree is weak, loss of all the leaves could prove to be fatal. Some trees are much better candidates for defoliation than others. For example, Japanese maples are not thrilled by the idea of defoliation and total defoliation is not a good idea. On the other hand, the gold standard for defoliation is the trident maple which can, with care, be defoliated as many as three times a year. If you are not

sure about your tree and there seems to be no advice available, best to only partially defoliate and see how the tree does. If it survives in good humor, more drastic measures can be considered next year.

Pines as well as deciduous trees are also defoliated. Pines are a special case because we usually do not think of needle pulling as defoliation but it really is because the needles actually are leaves. The needles are pulled for two reasons. Needles older than a couple of years are no longer producing energy for the tree and, worse, are a drag on the energy of the tree. Needles have at their base buds which can become active and grow when the needles are removed. Pines operate on a much longer time scale than deciduous trees. The fact that the needles are at least two years old before they are removed is what makes pine distinctly different from deciduous trees which naturally defoliate themselves every fall. For defoliation to have any effect on deciduous trees, it has to happen only a few months after the tree leafs out in the spring.

Defoliation is a powerful technique for creating a fine well-ramified bonsai with lush and full growth. We should all have this as a tool in our arsenal of bonsai management.

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.

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. 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 510-864-0841.

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.

April 4 - 8, Daly City, Bonsai Society of San Francisco Bonsai Exhibit at the San Francisco Flower and Garden Show, Cow Palace, 2600 Geneva Avenue. Show hours are 10 AM - 7 PM Wednesday thru Saturday, and 10 AM - 6 PM on Sunday. There will be demonstrations daily and sales of bonsai trees, pots, and other bonsai-related items by the club. For more information contact Bernard Marque at imarque@yahoo.com, or see show website <http://www.sfgardenshow.com/the-show>.

April 6 - 7, Fresno, GSBF Clark Bonsai Collection at Shinzen: Kōen-Nai No Bonsai, Bonsai in the Park, 7775 North Friant Road. We have planned a new event style this year. Join us for an afternoon BBQ on Friday and a full day of bonsai on Saturday.

April 7, Fresno, The Kōen-Nai No Bonsai, Bonsai in the Park, will be a single day event within the Shinzen Japanese Garden in Woodward Park. The activities will include the Annual Toko-Kazari Tokonoma Display Competition, a huge silent auction of bonsai and related items, two bonsai exhibitions including a show devoted to the trees of Ray Thieme, a plant sale and curator guided tours of the garden. The Kōen-Nai will be held concurrently with the Shinzen Spring Multicultural Festival, featuring food, music and dancing from throughout our diverse valley. Parking is \$5.

April 14 - 15, Sacramento, American Bonsai Association, Sacramento: Annual Spring Show at the Shepard Garden and Arts Center in McKinley Park, 3330 McKinley Blvd. Show hours are 10 AM - 4 PM with demonstrations by Peter Tea at 1:30 PM both days and a hands-on beginner workshop Sunday morning from 10 AM – 12 PM. There is a large member and vendor sales area, plenty of free parking and admission. A benefit drawing follows the demonstration each day and will include that day's demonstration tree and many bonsai and bonsai related items. For additional information call Renee Seely (916) 929-2106 or email breadcrust@comcast.net, or visit our website

<http://abasbonsai.org>.

April 14 - 15, San Jose, San Jose Betsuin Bonsai Club: 47th Annual Spring Exhibit at the San Jose Buddhist Church Betsuin, 640 North Fifth Street. Hours are Noon – 5 PM Saturday and Noon – 4 PM Sunday with demonstration at 1PM both days. Sales of plants and pots by the club and sales by vendors. For information call Jim Urhausen (408)275-8059.

April 14 - 15, Santa Cruz, Santa Cruz Bonsai Kai: 30th Annual Bonsai Show at the Museum of Art & History, 705 Front Street. Show hours are from 10 AM - 5 PM with demonstration at 2 PM both days. Saturday's demonstrator is Jonas Dupuich and Sunday's is yet to be determined. Demonstration tree and trees prepared by club members will be part of the raffle after each day's demonstration. Sales area will include quality vendor and member trees, pots, and other related bonsai items. In addition, enjoy the Watsonville Taiko Drummers, a Martial Arts demonstration, and other Japanese cultural events in the recently revitalized Abbott Square next to the Museum. Admission price is \$5.00 for both the Museum and the Bonsai Show. For more information, contact Ed Lambing at edinbonnydoon@comcast.net.

April 21, Modesto, Modesto Bonsai Club: 36th Annual Show at the Clarion Inn, 1612 Sisk Rd. Show hours are 10 AM – 4 PM with demonstration by Bonsai artist Sam Adina at 1 PM. Free admission, open to the public. Exhibit, multiple raffles, and sales of trees, pots and other related items.

April 21 – 22, Palo Alto, Kusamura Bonsai Club: 58th Annual Show, Lucie Stern Community Center, 1305 Middlefield Road. Show hours are Noon – 5 PM Saturday, and 11 AM - 5 PM Sunday with demonstrations at 1:30 PM each day. Saturday's demonstration by Darren and Laura Wong (Soh-Ju-En Satsuki Bonsai) and Sunday's demonstration by club members. Free admission and kids corner. Bonsai trees, pots, and other bonsai-related items will be for sale. For more information contact Charlene Fischer at charlenerae@mac.com or visit www.kusamurabonsai.org.

April 29, Watsonville, Watsonville Bonsai Club: 45th Annual Bonsai Exhibit held at the Watsonville Buddhist Temple, 423 Bridge St. Show hours are 10 AM - 4 PM, with a demonstration by award winning Bonsai Master Katsumi Kinoshita at 1:30 PM. Over 50 outstanding bonsai, large and small, young and old, will be on display. A raffle of bonsai items, plants and the demo tree will follow. Tea & cookies will be served. Plenty of parking for vehicles of all sizes; even for group outings. A vendor will be available to sate your plant appetite for bonsai or otherwise. For more

information contact Michael Anderson at (831) 247 - 9028 or margiesmemories@aol.com

May 4 - 5, Sacramento, Sacramento Bonsai Club:
72nd Annual Show Buddhist Church of Sacramento, 2401 Riverside Blvd. Show hours are Noon - 5 pm , Saturday and 10 am - 4 pm Sunday with demonstrations at 2 pm by Bonsai artist Sam Adina both days, followed by benefit drawings. Free Admission, open to the public. Club member sales of bonsai-related items.

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. Send your ad to janicedilbeck@comcast.net.

Newsletter Editor: Janice Dilbeck
Newsletter Star Reporter: Tom Colby

Articles or Services for Sale (or give-away)

Wanted to Buy (or for free)

East Bay Bonsai Society—Schedule for 2018
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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

Apr	11	Redwoods – Bob Shimon
Apr	22	Introduction to Bonsai at BLM – Bob Gould
May	9	Trident Maple – Peter Tea
May	27	Introduction to Bonsai at BGLM – John Nackley
June	13	Carving – Tim Kong
June	24	Introduction to Bonsai at BGLM – Janet Nelson
July	11	Auction
July	22	Introduction to Bonsai at BGLM – Linda Soliven
Aug	26	Introduction to Bonsai at BGLM – Tom Colby
Sept	12	How to Best Display Your Trees – Mike Pistello
Sept	23	Introduction to Bonsai at BGLM – Bob Gould
Oct	28	Introduction to Bonsai at BGLM – John Nackley
Nov	14	tbd
Nov	25	Introduction to Bonsai at BGLM – Janet Nelson
Dec	12	Holiday Dinner

Special Events

Aug	Potluck
Oct 13-14	Show
