



# The Tree Shrinker

Volume XXXXVII, No. 11

A MONTHLY BULLETIN

<http://www.eastbaybonsai.org>



[facebook.com/eastbaybonsai](https://www.facebook.com/eastbaybonsai)



[twitter.com/EastBayBonsai](https://twitter.com/EastBayBonsai)

## East Bay Bonsai Society

**Meeting:** November 14, 2018 7:30 PM

### November Meeting

The November meeting will feature a presentation on azaleas by Rick Garcia. A satsuki azalea in full bloom is as spectacular a sight as bonsai has to offer. Those of you that visited the azalea show earlier this year know what a big visual impact that a room full of azaleas can have. Unfortunately, many folks have tried to grow these beautiful plants and have not had the success that they hoped for. Azaleas are, in fact, easy to grow, but require conditions that are a little different from those that work so well for junipers and other common bonsai trees. Rick is a specialist with azaleas and will share with us all we need to know to grow these beautiful plants to perfection.



There was no sign up for refreshments for this meeting. If you have enjoyed goodies at the meetings and have not provided something this year, it is your turn.

### December Meeting



The December meeting is our annual holiday dinner which will be held on our regular meeting day, December 12. Circle your calendar for this date as the holiday dinner is the festive climax of the year. It is a potluck dinner with the club furnishing the main course

and beverages. Members bring side dishes and trimmings. Last year Michael Hylton provided the entertainment for the evening by assembling a spectacular program of images from our recent show as well as others taken throughout the year. Michael will once again present a program this year which we can look forward to with eager anticipation.

You are aware of the many fine people who comprise the membership of EBBS. If you looked at the splendid bonsai exhibited at the recent show, you also are aware that there are many fine bonsai artists in our midst. What you may not know is that in the club there are many superb cooks, and the holiday dinner is where they showcase their skills. The great food, fellowship and Michael's program all will make the evening special. See you there!

### Show



This year's show was another great success. It was truly a group effort and thanks are due to all those who pitched in to help make it one of the best shows yet. It was amazing to see the large number of fine bonsai that were shown by the members of EBBS. Thanks to all that showed trees and special thanks for the new members that showed a tree for the first time.

Our show headliner, Jonas Dupuich, led a fine critique of the show on Sunday morning. His demonstration on a juniper on Saturday and his second demonstration on a hornbeam were both very well



received. The headliner is expected to provide a learning experience for all of us and Jonas delivered in spades.



Many people deserve recognition for their efforts to make the show a success. First and foremost on the list is the chair of the show, Lisa Harper. And what a great job she did to make it all run smoothly. We all owe Lisa a big thank you for all her hard work to make the show a success.

Special thanks are due to all the committee chairs who had the job of organizing and supervising volunteers. It was particularly gratifying

to see that many of the committee chairs were filled by relatively new members of the club.

Last, but by no means least, thanks to all who volunteered to help with the show. "It couldn't have happened without you" may be a bit trite, but none the



less, is certainly true. Willing help is what makes it all go smoothly.

Each year the show is a major financial venture for the club. Major expenses are the cost of the headliner and food. Income is derived from plant sales, the silent auction, raffle of one of the demonstration trees and auction of the second demonstration tree. It would appear that the show this year was a financial success.



Mention must be made of four commercial companies who made donations of food for the hospitality table of our show. These people went out of their way to support our show and we should return the favor by going out of our way to support them. Trader Joes, Peet's Coffee, Safeway (on Grand Avenue) and Chipotle Mexican Grill all deserve thanks for their generous donations as well as your patronage. Also, a tip of the hat goes to Suzanne Muller and John Nackley for contacting the commercial donors.

Members of the bonsai community were also generous in





their donations to the plant sales and the silent auction. These folks deserve our special thanks.

**EBBS's Finest at the US National Bonsai Exhibition**  
***by Michael Jensen-Akula***

I had the pleasure to interview Janet Nelson and Rick Trumm, two of our EBBS 'VIPs' on 10/23/18. I arrived at their house, and as usual, there was a note on the door that they were both in the back yard, working on their trees. The interview proceeded as Rick worked on a juniper that he is preparing for the GSBF show.

Rick has always been fascinated with bonsai. In his early 20s he regularly hiked the north peak of Mount Diablo and saw the junipers there. He always thought that someday, he would like to make plants like these into bonsai. Fifteen years later he went to an EBBS show at Lake Merritt, and that got him started. He put a juniper in a pot and was 'amazed' that the plant thrived, and that the process 'really worked'. He joined the EBBS club and it was all uphill from there. His favorite trees are junipers and pines.

Janet met Rick at a Sierra Club hike, and he rekindled her interest in bonsai. She attended the Merritt College bonsai classes. Dennis Makishima and several EBBS members there coached and encouraged her. She joined EBBS and has performed many duties, including board member and president. Her favorite trees are 'interesting botanical specimens' (said with a wry grin). They both enjoy working on their trees virtually every day, and Rick admits to periodically using a headlamp to finish a tree at night. They host the annual EBBS potluck every August, and it is a great chance to see their spectacular collection, which appears more refined every year.

Rick and Janet recently exhibited at the US National Bonsai Exhibition in New York. This event is in Rochester, under the leadership of Bill Valvanis, who gets it done in part through the force of his personality. He arranges a huge volunteer staff to set up the show, (and work at his nursery!).

Rick was encouraged by Boon Manakitivipart to enter a tree. This is a juried show, and he needed to submit entry information and pictures of the tree (and pay \$75) in order to be considered for the show. He submitted two trees, and one was accepted. This was the easy part! Trees then need to be transported from all over the US to Rochester.

Jonas Dupuich drove a rental truck from Northern California with 19 trees and his vending material, and the various artists split the cost of transportation. This amounted to about \$200 per tree each way. Jonas drove the rental truck back to New York (and per Janet, it is not clear that he would do this again, as it took four days). The truck had a translucent ceiling, which allowed light for the trees during the trip, and Jonas put a large foam slab on the floor of the truck to minimize vibration. For unclear reasons, a few of the trees in the middle had their moss shaken off, and this needed to be reapplied.

Rick and Janet arrived one day early by plane and took the day to go to Niagara Falls, then back to Rochester. Jonas arrived with the trees which needed to be set up by noon on Friday. Apparently, a few exhibitors arrived after the deadline, and were not allowed to put their trees in the show.



There was a final touch up of the trees prior to the show. The tables were already set up 'perfectly' by the volunteers in a huge local sports complex. The 281 trees in the exhibit were all of very high quality and came from 27 states, Puerto Rico and Canada. The shohin section was also superb. Photos were not allowed during the exhibit, but Janet and Rick managed to get some shots during set up.

Monetary prizes of up to \$1000 were bestowed in multiple categories at the awards banquet on Saturday night. Rick and Janet sat with Dennis Vojtilla, a former longtime EBBS member and past president, now living in Oregon. Dennis has won the award for the best deciduous



tree two years running, and is looking for the trifecta next year. There was a large and very active vendor area. As an example, Sarah Rayner brought 'about a thousand' pots and sold virtually all of them.

In addition, they did a lot of networking and seeing friends old and new. They also toured the Valvanis and other local nurseries.

John Kirby drove the truck back. Jonas provided the phytosanitary certificate (through his nursery) to get the trees back into California. Reportedly, when Jonas got back to Alameda, his street was closed due to roadwork, and he had to take the trees around the block and cart them in by hand.

Rick observed that over time he has seen more abstract art in the displays. He stated that in order for this to work, you first need to have a good tree. They also were able to appreciate the different trees from the East, as they display more deciduous varieties.

For more details of the show, search the Valvanis bonsai blog:

<https://valavanisbonsaiblog.com/2018/09/13/2018-6thus-national-bonsai-exhibition-review/>

Thanks again to Rick and Janet for this interview. Their relationship seems very complimentary. Janet tells me that she is the organizer and Rick is the detail oriented one. They have both provided a tremendous amount of support for EBBS over the years!

### **Mammoth Fund Raiser**

Each year the bonsai garden hosts the biggest local sale and auction of the year, all as a benefit to the garden. This event is important because it provides a major amount of the funds needed to operate the garden. The event is held at the garden center on the weekend of February 16 and 17, and you should mark these dates on your calendar because it is a source for all your bonsai needs including trees in all stages of development, pots, stands, tools and much more. Opportunities for you to purchase anything you might need are an auction, a sale and numerous vendors.



Plans are already underway for the next fundraiser. You can provide trees for the auction held on Saturday. The single requirement for an auction tree is that it be planted in a bonsai pot. The garden collects thirty percent of the auction price and you can specify a minimum bid price. Auction trees are needed to be identified early because the trees are photographed for an auction program which is distributed well in advance of the event. If you have a tree or other item that you would like to submit for the auction, contact Bob Gould ([rgould1003@aol.com](mailto:rgould1003@aol.com)) who can provide the details. You can also submit items, including trees and accessories such as pots to the sales. These can be brought to the sales area on Sunday morning. The garden collects

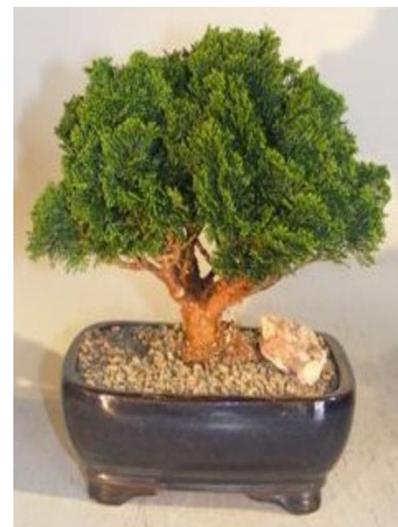
twenty five percent of the selling price. Bob can also provide details for this sale.

### **Hinoki Cypress**



The big three of the bonsai world are pines, junipers and maples. There are a lot of other plants that make wonderful bonsai but somehow don't quite get the publicity that the big three get, and as a result, frequently are overlooked. Noteworthy in this group is the Hinoki Cypress. First, we need a bit of background. The trees naturally grow in Japan. A very closely related tree grows in Taiwan. The wood is very highly valued in Japan, partly for rot resistance and partly because of the fine-grained texture of the wood. As a result, the wood is used for a wide variety of purposes. Fine century old temples are made from Hinoki timber and, on the other extreme, high end ping pong paddles are also made from Hinoki wood. The botanical name for the Hinoki genus is *Chamaecyprus* which translates to false cypress, and the tree is frequently sold commercially under this name. While this name may amaze and delight botanists and horticulturalists alike, the tree is known to the bonsai world not as false cypress but the real deal.

There are literally hundreds of named varieties of the Hinoki Cypress which range from landscape trees to tiny dwarfs. The dwarfs come about in a special way. Conifers in general and the Hinoki in particular occasionally produce on branches little tufts of foliage known as witches brooms where something has gone wrong on the cellular level which prevents formation of a normal sized branch. These biological mistakes are propagated as cuttings and remain small. One would think that the dwarf



cultivars would be ideal for bonsai, particularly shohin, but they are seldom seen. It is the landscape Hinokis where the bonsai interest lies.



Well's Special variety of Hinoki is available at nurseries and is a particularly desirable cultivar for two reasons. First, it has finer and tighter foliage than many of the other varieties and second, it is usually grown on its own roots. Many of the other varieties are subject to root rot in the bay area when used as landscaping trees and as a result are sold grafted onto root rot resistance root stock. Grafted trees in general may pose problems with a smoothly tapered trunk later on. The problem comes from the fact that the rootstock may grow at a different rate than the tree above it giving a bumpy look to the trunk. Wells Special is not subject to root rot and is usually sold ungrafted.



When purchasing nursery stock for use as a bonsai, look for trees that have roots that spread evenly around the trunk, a trunk that has taper, and a tree that has a lot of small fine branches inside the outer foliage. These small branches are the basis for the splendid bonsai to come since the tree wants to grow long branches and these do not readily bud back, leading eventually to long skinny bare branches which are unattractive. Hence, special care must be given to keep these little branches alive and healthy since they are normally quickly shaded out and die. The secret is to cut back the longer branches to allow light to fall on the interior of the tree where the little foliage is located. Other

important features of the potential bonsai are the trunk of the tree which should flow toward the viewer, and there should be lower branches that come toward to greet the viewer.

Purchased nursery stock should be treated gently. The root ball should be cut down to fit a bonsai pot in a couple of stages over the span of two years or more. Also, removing large branches should be spread out over a couple of years. Hinoki do not handle hot sun well. Those of us who live in the Walnut Creek area should protect their Hinoki from afternoon sun. Also, it is best to provide some sun protection after repotting until the tree is established, even in the Oakland area. Other than that, Hinoki do not present any unexpected cultural challenges.

Randall Lee is a EBBS member who is the local guru for Hinoki Cypress and is scheduled for a presentation on Hinoki Cypress early next year. Randall usually brings some of his superb Hinoki bonsai so you will be able to see just how wonderful these trees can be. If you will be looking for a New Years' resolution besides the usual eating less and exercising more, you could do far worse than resolving to add a Hinoki to your bonsai collection.

### **Bonsai Calendar**

- Sun – Move deciduous trees into full sun. Rotate all trees at least once a month.
- Watering – Adjust watering for winter.
- Fertilizing – Use low or zero nitrogen fertilizers.
- Repotting – Best done when plants begin their dormant period and continuing warmth encourages root development, often this month.
- Styling/Pruning – Shape both evergreens and deciduous trees.
- Insect and disease control – Remove dead plant material. Watch for and treat insect infestations.
- Propagating/Collecting – Continue root cuttings.

*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.

November 9, San Francisco, Bonsai Society of San Francisco (BSSF): BSSF invites you to join in this demonstration 7 – 10 PM by (Japan trained) Bjorn Bjorholm at the Hall of Flowers (A.K.A: Strybing Arboretum, the County Fair Building or San Francisco Botanical Garden Society), 10th Avenue and Lincoln Way, on the edge of Golden Gate Park. Enter through the parking lot off Lincoln and walk along the south side of the building. Demo tree will be raffled.

December 1, Clovis, Fresno Bonsai Society and GSBF Clark Bonsai Collection: 10th Annual Bonsai Yard Sale at the Clovis Botanical Garden, 945 North

Clovis Avenue, from 8 AM until 2 PM. Free parking and bargains galore on bonsai, pre-bonsai, pots, books, stands, accent plants and all things bonsai. Everyone one is welcome to buy, sell or trade. Come early for the best selection. Contact Dave Soho for more information at 530 722-7132 or Mike Saul at [tinytreeme@sbcglobal.net](mailto:tinytreeme@sbcglobal.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. Send your ad to [janicedilbeck@comcast.net](mailto:janicedilbeck@comcast.net).

---

Newsletter Editor: Janice Dilbeck

Newsletter Star Reporter: Tom Colby

---

## **East Bay Bonsai Society—Schedule for 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/](http://www.gsbf-lakemerritt.org/)

### **Meeting Program**

Nov 14 Satsuki – Rick Garcia

Nov 25 Introduction to Bonsai at BGLM – Janet Nelson

Dec 12 Holiday Dinner

### **Special Events**

---