



The Tree Shrinker

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A MONTHLY BULLETIN

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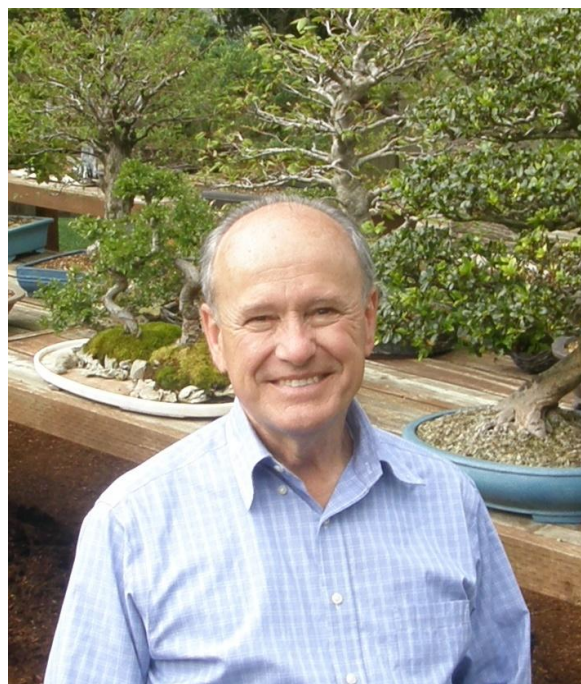
East Bay Bonsai Society

Meeting: February 13, 2019 7:30 PM

February Meeting

Hold on to your hats! The February meeting is sure to be an educational experience! We are honored to have David DeGroot, the award winning designer and author to delight us with an entertaining compare and contrast of Japanese and Chinese bonsai designs complete with video. In addition, David has agreed to do a short critique of plants brought in by members.

David will actually be doing a two-for-one as he will be holding a workshop in the garden center before our evening meeting. The workshop is scheduled from 1:30 to 5:30 with the cost just \$50 per person. If you haven't signed up and would like to participate, you can contact Lisa Harper – phone# (510) 220-3339 or e-mail lisaharper@me.com.



David is Curator Emeritus of the Pacific Bonsai Museum in Federal Way, WA where he served as managing curator for 25 years. He has been studying and practicing bonsai since 1972.

David has studied bonsai in Japan with Yasuo Mitsuya at Tokai-en Bonsai Nursery. He studied satsuki (azaleas) with Tatemori Gondo and Hayata Nakayama at Suisho Nakayama Nursery, and formal bonsai display with Uhaku Sudo. at Chikufu-en Bonsai Nursery.

His educational journal articles have been published throughout the U.S. and in eight other countries, and he is author of two books published by the American Bonsai Society - *Basic Bonsai Design* and *Principles of Bonsai Design*, now in its second printing.

David travels widely to lecture, and has presented programs on five continents. He is active with several bonsai organizations in the Puget Sound area and serves as Secretary for Bonsai Clubs International.

David will be bringing books to sell and a signed copy will be part of the benefit raffle at the end of the evening. You won't want to miss this program!

Thank you to Michael Jensen-Akula, PC & KC Coyle and Julie Holcomb for providing our treats for this night.

March Meeting

The March meeting will feature our very own Bill Castellon. Bill always proves to be both entertaining and educational as he presents topics such as Bonjin, Shohin, and Black Pines. This time Bill will be styling a Princess Persimmon. It will be pre-potted and ready to go to the lucky benefit raffle winner.

January Meeting

Our January meeting featured Sam Adina, the sensei and instructor of the Modesto Bonsai Club. Sam started in bonsai in the year 2000 when he joined the Yamato Bonsai club in Hayward. Studying under Johnny Uchida and Boon Manakitivipart, he eventually joined the Modesto Bonsai Club. He was mentored under George Fujita who passed his position of club instructor to Sam.



Sam brought in a monster of an olive to work; this was material he had collected about two years ago. He described it as a collection from the base of a much larger olive. This was essentially a sucker from that larger tree, but was itself more than a 6" diameter trunk. This segment was flat cut at the bottom. Sam assured us that olives will root despite the absolute lack of feeder roots during collection, as long as the base included parts of the original root tissue. Cuttings from limbs or trunk will often root, but are less reliable. The tree was in 100% pumice. Sam said he was confident that, after two years and good top growth, the tree could be repotted now. He recommended repotting olives in the traditional, spring repotting season, and, at least for the bay area, putting the tree in the hottest, sunniest part of your yard.



Sam began work by removing suckers from the base of the tree and selecting potential primary limbs. Like many of our presenters, he recommends letting primary limbs grow unchecked as long as necessary to reach the diameter that is required. Wire them while they're small to generate some movement and the desired angle, but no cutting! Once the desired diameter is achieved, then cut back to start developing secondary branching. Sam warned that on a healthy olive wire will cut in quickly (as soon as 4 – 6 weeks), so keep an eye on it.

This tree had a large chop at the top that Sam had carved a little to generate taper. He noted that large scars like this will never heal over with olives. So you have only two choices – disguise it or continue carving to make a feature out of it. Sam's vision for this tree was a slightly more inclined planting angle, two or three primary branches, and a developed top no more than 4 to 6 inches higher than its current height. Sam recommends a brown, unglazed pot for olives. Suzanne Muller was the happy raffle winner of this tree. Assuming she was able to get it home I'm sure she'll continue its progress to a stunning bonsai.



Dues

It's that time of year again! Dues are due! Some of us are now feeling pretty smug because they have already paid their dues for 2019. The rest of us need to be reminded that the time has come for dues renewal. 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. Time is running out to get your dues in by the March meeting! So don't delay!! We will have the Dues box available at the February meeting or our treasurer, Pat Cahill, will be delighted to receive your check (make out to EBBS) for dues by mail. Just send to: EBBS Treasurer, 4933 Cochrane, Oakland, CA, 94618-2701.



Collecting Bonsai Stock (Continued from January)

By: Brian Brandley

Topography Matters

Choosing a site based on topography can make collecting much easier. Trees grow really well in good, deep soil. Trees in good soil tend to have deep roots and straight trunks. Easier sites include rocky ridges, eroded creek sides, and marshy areas where tree roots can't go deep or don't have to. In the Rockies I knew I was in a good area when I saw lots of mature trees that had been uprooted by storms, exposing shallow root systems. Ponderosa pines can be collected from pockets in granite with their entire root systems intact. I've tried taking Ponderosa's from gravel soils, and had to chase roots for 20 feet from the trunk without finding any feeder roots. Choosing the right place and the right tree can make the difference between an 80 – 100% survival rate, and near zero. The right site also exposes trees to environmental stress, generating the tree characteristics we love. High wind sites, northern exposure, browsing by livestock and poor soils result in trees that show their struggle to survive.

What to Collect?

The short answer to this question is, anything that looks good. But, there's very little point collecting seedlings and other trees that you can find easily at nurseries. Typically, you collect trees for the trunk so focus on the first 6 to 12 inches. Often times collected trees don't have exceptional nebari. You kind of take what you get. Look for features that show a struggle to live in the wild. Some species will be easier to collect than others. Deciduous trees typically survive better with limited roots than conifers do. But any tree that can be recovered with a large percentage of feeder roots is a good candidate.

How to Collect?

The key to survival of collected trees is collecting enough of the fine, feeder roots. So, you need to select trees that have feeder roots close to the trunk, or species that can survive with few feeder roots. To ensure survival, you should collect as much of the root system as you can. Remember, whatever you dig you're going to have to carry back to your car, so 100 pounds of dirt usually isn't practical. If you can rock the tree back and forth and see significant movement in the root zone, you probably have a tree that's reasonably easy to collect.

Tools

The tools you'll need depend on your collecting site. In good soil, a pick, shovel and saw will work, but often a shovel isn't much use. On rocky ridges I carry a short pry bar, a folding saw, and hand pruners. On more variable sites I would include a one-hand pick and a digging knife. If not too far from the car I would substitute a cordless reciprocating saw for the folding saw. A hand winch (come along) can be useful. The

further from the car, the fewer tools I carry. I use a metal frame backpack to pack the tools in, and the trees out.



Other Supplies

In addition to hand tools, you'll need something to wrap the tree. I often carry burlap or old towels to wrap the root ball. You'll need water for the tree (as well as yourself). In some sites you can access a nearby creek or pond to wet the towels. Wrap the roots in the wet towels, then wrap the wet root ball in plastic cling wrap, or a large plastic trash bag. Wrap the whole thing tightly with duck tape. If possible, put another trash bag over the top of the tree to reduce moisture loss. If I have a long distance back to the car, I use bungee cords to tie the tree to the backpack frame. While driving home be sure to protect the trees from the wind.

After Care

After care is all about managing moisture. Get your collected trees home as soon as possible. If you're using a pick-up truck, make sure you protect the trees from wind on your trip home. Once home, get your trees into pots or a planting bed ASAP. I've used pond baskets when possible but often you have to build a box to fit a strange shaped root ball. Make sure it's free draining. There are two schools of thought about cleaning the root ball. Some collectors leave the native soil alone, while others clean all native soil out before potting. I guess I take an intermediate position. I clean all the native soil out that I can without disturbing the roots too much. If it will come out easily, I take it out, and then leave the rest. I make sure the entire root ball is thoroughly soaked before potting. Use good draining soil, secure the tree to the pot, and put the tree in the shade. I've had success burying the pot in a raised bed of pea gravel. Try not to move the tree at all for the first growing season, keep the soil moist but not wet, and mist the foliage regularly – several times a day if possible for the first month or so. Remember, if the tree isn't actively growing, it won't need to be watered as often. Don't work the tree at all for at least a full year. The tree will tell you when it's ready

by showing vigorous growth. Sometimes, particularly for conifers, it might take two or three years before it's ready. If it doesn't turn brown and crispy, don't give up on it. I've had trees that did absolutely nothing for three years, and then suddenly start growing like crazy.



If you know of a potential collecting site and need a partner to help out, give me a shout!

Show and Tell

Our Show and Tell table was loaded this month with olives of many different varieties. Thanks to everyone who helped out by bringing in their plant. Here are just a few of the presenters:



Mike Cullen



Brian Brandley



Michael Hylton

Mr Bonsai

By: John Nackley

"Mr. Bonsai" is a title that easily fits Robert (Bob) Gould. Bob's breadth of knowledge and depth of experience singles him out throughout the state. These traits cover the width of bonsai including satsuki and shohin bonsai to the allied art of suiseki. No one would be surprised had he taken up pottery to boot. What makes his crown shine is his devotion to the art combined with his drive for excellence in all his work. Bob and Polly's suiseki pieces have been shown nationally and are included in the Oakland Museum of California's permanent collection.

His bonsai passion is the result of his mother's gifting him a bonsai tree in 1973. The family was living in Loomis, CA. At Polly's urging, he began studying the Japanese art at the local college's night school to relieve his ignorance. He was hooked! He soon was taking lessons from Maruyama at the teacher's nursery in south Sacramento along with his friend Doug Ruffer. Maruyama's speciality was satsuki, and Bob became addicted to these flowering bonsai and remains so to date.



In 1976, the family moved south to Lafayette, CA. and Bob and Polly became active members of EBBS in 1977. Along with John Castle and John North, Bob has attended workshops with John Naka when he travelled to the Bay area, and he has collected juniper with Harry Hirao in southern CA. Bob was among Kathy Shanner's original students when she returned from Japan in the 90's. Pushing his art even farther, he continues to take lessons from Kathy and Peter Tea and Rick Garcia.. He is also a member of BABA, the Bay Area Shonin Society, and to both the SF and the East Bay Suiseki clubs. At all these clubs he has had his work displayed, as well as at the state conventions. He has displayed bonsai multiple times in the GSBF's annual convention. Bob and Polly have made five bonsai tours to Japan, including a trip with John Naka.

Like most great artists, despite the quality of his work, he continues to push for still greater excellence in it.

For the past two decades, Bob has been committed to the success of the Bonsai Garden at Lake Merritt. After participating in the building of the Garden in 1998, he served in many roles; from trash man to Board member, he not only volunteers weekly, serving as docent, tour coordinator, problem solver and inventory specialist, but often comes in for urgent needs. He is the Garden's tour guide *par excellence*.

During his 42 year affiliation with EBBS, he has been one of the longest serving Board members, presented at the monthly meetings innumerable times, and has taught and continues to teach on rotation the *Introduction to Bonsai* class, as well as organized the club's annual tokonoma exhibits. Luckily for our club, Bob is part of its fiber. He is rather an understated person, however, his work in bonsai and suiseki speak loudly.

Potting time, time for caution

By: Don Meeker

The recent report of a New Zealand man who died from Legionnaires' disease contacted from his use of commercial composted potting mix is a reminder that there are some risks. Usually in plastic containers, the organic material, often containing animal wastes, makes a perfect environment for growing bacteria and fungi. While many of those are beneficial for growing plants, not all are so friendly for humans.

Use Cautions

Recommended precautions include: open the soil mix carefully, wear gloves and a mask, dampen down the product, use it in a well-ventilated area and wash your hands thoroughly. If the mix is dry try keeping a spray bottle of water to dampen to keep the dust controlled. If possible put the amount you will use for the current work spread in the sun to help control any infectious material. Just plain be careful and wash up well when through. Also, if you use Perlite to give texture to your potting mix be very careful to control and avoid the dust. The dust can be as dangerous to your lungs as asbestos.

Bonsai Calendar

- Watering – Reduce watering, but ensure plants receive sufficient water
- Fertilizing – Feed with 0-10-10.
- Repotting – Repot deciduous trees and junipers
- Styling/Pruning – Do heavier pruning. Cut large limbs on pines.
- Graft – All species

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 510-846-0841.

Events by Others

February 2 - 3 2019 Corona Del Mar, California

Orange Empire Bonsai Society (OESB): First Annual Bonsai Exhibition at the Sherman Library & Gardens (www.slgardens.org), 2647 Pacific Coast Highway. Show hours are 10:30 AM - 4 PM both days. Trees on display, bonsai trees and items for sale. Bonsai Master Jason Chan workshop on Saturday at 11 AM with Prostrata Junipers. Check their website for workshop availability, if interested. For more information visit www.slgardens.org or contact David Nadzam at also, (714) 474-5712 or tetsujinbb62@gmail.com

February 16 – 17, 2019 Oakland, California

GSBF Bonsai Garden at Lake Merritt: The Annual Mammoth Auction and Sale Fundraiser will be held at the Lakeside Park Garden Center, 666 Bellevue Ave., Lake Merritt. Saturday: Auction preview at Noon with Auction starting at 1 pm. Sunday: Vendor Sales start at 9 a.m.; Plant Sales start at 10 a.m.; Demonstration start at 1 p.m. Everyone is encouraged to submit their bonsai and bonsai related items for consideration to be included in the Mammoth Auction at the earliest date possible. "Private collections to be featured." The Bonsai Garden at Lake Merritt will be open that weekend 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. on Saturday, and Noon to 3 p.m. on Sunday. Please find time to visit the Bonsai Garden and observe the many installments under the Garden Revitalization Opportunity (GRO) Project. For more information or to sell bonsai, email bonsailakemerritt@gmail.com and visit <http://BonsaiLakeMerritt.com>.

Feb. 23 – 24, 2019 San Marino, California

Bonsai-A-Thon XXIII at the Huntington Library and Botanical Gardens, 1151 Oxford Road. This is the annual fundraiser for the GSBF Collection at The Huntington. Event admission is free with Bonsai-A-Thon "early bird" registration between 8 AM - 9 AM. Event hours are 8 AM - 4:30 PM both days. For more information visit [The GSBF Collection at The Huntington](http://TheGSBFCollectionatTheHuntington.org).

March 23 – 24, 2019 Oakland, California

Bay Area Bonsai Associates: 38th Annual Bonsai Exhibition at the Lakeside Park Garden Center 666 Bellevue Avenue. Show hours are 5 – 9 PM Saturday and 10 AM – 4 PM Sunday. Light dinner at 5:30 PM Saturday followed by a bonsai demonstration by club members from 6:30 to 9 PM. Benefit drawing of demo tree(s). Winning ticket must be present to win. Sales of plants, bonsai, and other bonsai related items both days. Admission is free. Parking fee to the Lakeside Park entrance is required during the park hours. For more information, please contact Janice Dilbeck janicedilbeck@comcast.net

March 23 - 24, 2019 San Marino, California

California Bonsai Society Show: Annual show at the Huntington Library and Botanical Gardens, 1151 Oxford Road, Ahmanson Room, Show hours are 10 AM - 4:30PM both days. Demonstration Saturday at 11 AM will feature the reconstructing of John Naka's Goshen 3. Admission fee to enter Huntington Library and Gardens: Adult: \$29, Senior (65+): \$24, Student (f/t ID): \$24, Youth (4-11): \$13, Child (under 4): free, Groups (15+): \$23, Huntington Library Members free - Parking free.

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.

Newsletter Editor: Beverly Martinez
Newsletter Writers: Brian Brandley, Don Meeker,
John Nackley, Beverly Martinez
Photography: Suzanne Muller

East Bay Bonsai Society—Schedule for 2019

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

Feb 13 David Degroot - Daytime workshop/Evening program; China and Japan compare/contrast
Mar 13 Bill Castellon – Princess Persimmon
Mar 24 Introduction to Bonsai at BGLM – Michael Jensen-Akula
Mar 25 Workshop at Merritt College
Apr 10 TBD
Apr 22 Workshop at Merritt College
Apr 28 Introduction to Bonsai at BGLM – John Nackley/Bob Gould
May 8 Kora Dalager – Bonsai display
May 26 Introduction to Bonsai at BGLM – Janet Nelson
Jun 12 TBD
Jun 23 Introduction to Bonsai at BGLM – Tom Colby
Jul 10 Annual Auction
Jul 28 Introduction to Bonsai at BGLM – Michael Jensen-Akula

Special events

Feb 13 - Workshop at the garden center with David DeGroot
