



The Tree Shrinker

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A MONTHLY BULLETIN

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East Bay Bonsai Society Annual Auction: July 10, 2019

Set-up 6:00 PM
Preview 7:00 PM
Auction 7:30 PM

July Auction

Excitement is building for our annual auction in July. The auction will be held at our usual meeting place, the Lakeside Garden Center, and set up for the event will start at 6:00 pm. Sale items should be onsite by 7:00 pm. Tree tags (make sure you fill out all three sections) and seller log sheets are attached to this newsletter and will also be available the evening of the auction. To avoid duplicate tag numbers, please use three initials on the tags to identify your auction items. The auction will start promptly at 7:30, so be sure that by this time you have checked in with your auction items. You should have also surveyed what is available for sale, have your bidding paddle and be ready to participate in the furious bidding in the auction.



Hopefully you have reviewed your collection and have selected those plants that do not quite meet your expectations. You may want to pass these on to more loving home at the auction as well as any surplus bonsai related items such as scrolls, pots, pot stands and tools. As a matter of fact, anything in good taste can be offered in the auction. Note that this excludes husbands, wives, past significant others, kids and the family dog, but just about everything else is welcome.

The minimum projected selling price for all items is \$10 so save the little seedlings in a Dixie cup for our show

in the fall. Here very inexpensive items sell quickly. There is a limit of 10 items that can be entered in the auction. Items can be bundled as, for example, a box of several pots sold as a group counts as one item. As usual, the club keeps 20% of the selling price and you get the rest to hopefully use to buy more stuff at the auction. Of course, you can also donate your item to the auction where the club gets the total selling price. Donations are a great way for supporting your club.



The auction provides a wonderful opportunity to practice your merchandising skills. If you want to sell a tree, anything that you can do to it that allows the potential customer to more easily visualize the tree as a finished bonsai will lead to a higher selling price. The most obvious step is to remove any weeds growing in the pot. It may surprise you to know that once in a while trees have shown up complete with weeds in past auctions. As you might imagine, they did not sell for much. Trees in bonsai pots sell better than trees in plastic nursery cans. Branches that are not clearly of value to the finished bonsai design can be trimmed off. Wiring of at least a major branch or two also helps the buyer to see

the potential of the tree. If you are selling a pot, scrub out the residual dirt. Stands can always use a bit of furniture polish to spiff them up. Old English Scratch Remover (available at Safeway at a nominal price) works well for this.

There are always fine things to be found at the auction to upgrade your collection and generally at most affordable prices. The auction is not only a lot of fun but also is a very important fundraiser for the club. It deserves your support in providing items for sale, buying lots of stuff and helping out with the many tasks required to make it all run smoothly. Suzanne Muller is in charge of the auction. See her if you want to volunteer to do your part in making the auction a success. They could really use your help. If you would like to volunteer in the auction (it is lots of fun!), please contact Suzanne Muller at smuller@mbcf.com or phone (925) 890-0506.

June Program

By: Tom Fedor

On this occasion we were treated by our own Polly Gould to a presentation about suiseki, i.e., water stones whose wondrous forms are the result of tumbling over time in moving water. We learned that the art of suiseki began in Japan in the 1700's initially in admiration of Chinese stones, and Chinese art generally. Late in the Edo period, stones more reminiscent of natural forms became more interesting to Japanese artists.



Polly corrected a common misunderstanding that the finest suiseki are black by distributing to the audience Japanese publications containing color photos of outstanding *brown* (gasp!) stones shown by the San Francisco club in 2015. Other publications, both books and periodicals, were circulated throughout her presentation for the further interest of attendees.

Stones can be evaluated, like much of Japanese art, in terms of asymmetric triangles. She showed an example of a “near mountain” stone with lots of craggy but smooth parts. The visible crags provided the perspective of nearness, whereas a more rounded stone can appear as though it were distant. One looks for totally smooth stones, and ones with sharp edges

are avoided. Stones may be cut flat on the bottom in a way that enhances their overall appearance. Patina is also highly prized. Various examples were displayed and their particular features were discussed.

She discussed how one might look for stones, stressing the importance of being prepared for vigorous outdoor exercise, and where one might look for stones of various types. There are two kinds of collectors, Polly says. “Bonsai people” who are not totally gaga for suiseki “don’t want a lot of stones in the house” so they need only six stones: a small stone going this way and a small stone going that way, as well as medium and large examples of each, because the stone is always displayed with a tree, large with large, small with small, going this way or that way as needed.

Stones are usually displayed on a flat base, many examples of which were available for discussion. and their base conforms in shape with the stone’s perimeter. At bonsai shows, a suiseki is displayed behind and to the side of its accompanying tree (since the tree is the main event), similar to the way scrolls are hung to one side of a tree. The stones take precedence, obviously, in stone shows.



The evening’s second half featured well known member John Doig, who led a spirited participation in the art of shohin display. One might display a single tree, perhaps with an accent plant. One could elevate the accent to the lower platform of a two-point display, tree uppermost. Or one could replace the accent and show a second tree. Lively discussion followed about assembling multi-point displays, with trees going this way or that way, up or down and ways different species can be combined. For example, two trees of the same species often complement each other better if they are placed diagonally than vertically.

John shared his view that too much emphasis may be placed on defining a tree’s front, since he has shohin that are attractive from more than one view. In fact, one tree was wrongly suspected of being back to front at the top of one assembly. It was a juniper, which leads to John’s further opinion that black pines may not always make sense at the top of a display, since in nature they

are lowland trees. Why not a juniper at the top, especially if it conveys mountaintop ruggedness?

Sometimes empty space, or “negative” space, is required in a display with particular trees, which John demonstrated by swapping out from a particular assembly just one tree. The new tree’s form was seen to require an element of emptiness elsewhere, and the changing out of another tree.

With shohin, John says, the usual “rules” about pot colors, like unglazed for conifers and muted glazes for deciduous, are out the window. Anything goes for color for any tree. It is important to keep the pots within a display from showing too much similarity in shape or color. Mix it up, just as with trees. It takes this guy hours in his kitchen to practice a single display for show. We look forward to estimating the number of hours he prepared for the show we’ll see at the end of June!

August Potluck

Circle Saturday, August 10, on your calendar! That’s the date of our annual potluck picnic that the club holds in place of the regular Wednesday meeting. This year Michael Jensen-Akula has generously agreed to host the event with his wife at their lovely home in the Oakland hills. The event usually starts in the mid afternoon and continues until dusk. This event is one of the highlights of the year and should not be missed.



Michael has a beautiful yard which overlooks the bay but has limited bonsai material. He has requested that members bring bonsais to display to add to the enjoyment of the day. The chance to see beautiful bonsai and Michael and his wife's lovely home is alone worth your visit. EBBS have some truly gifted cooks and the potluck lets you sample some of their best efforts. Best of all, the potluck is a chance for members to socialize on an informal basis. Watch the next newsletter for exact time, travel directions and food assignments and do plan to come. The pot luck is one of the more enjoyable events of the year.

Did you know?

By: Suzanne Muller

1963...Mission Statement

The objectives of a society such as ours are as follows:

To promote interest and enjoyment of Bonsai; to assemble and make available information on the culture of Bonsai, to promote the collection and the exhibition of our specimen trees, that others may enjoy our hobby.

Indoor Bonsais

By: Brian Brandley

Why Indoors? It is lovely to display bonsai indoors, but the health of the tree is our first concern. All trees will do better when grown outside. When are indoor bonsai possible or preferred? Some people have no outdoor space and must grow inside if they’re to do bonsai at all. Others maintain trees that are not able to tolerate outdoor conditions for a least part of the year. When I lived in Wisconsin, growing indoors was absolutely necessary for getting me through the winter. I viewed any extra costs as being cheaper than therapy. However, without an unlimited budget or a heated greenhouse, most of us will need to make some compromises to grow trees indoors.

Which species? Any bonsai can be displayed indoors temporarily. One strategy for indoor display is to grow trees outdoors and rotate them through an indoor display a few days at a time. I’m sure any tree can be grown long-term indoors if you’re willing to invest enough on lights, humidity, temperature and other requirements. However, long term tree growth indoors will be much easier if one selects species that are more tolerant of indoor conditions, particularly those of low light. Ficus (microcarpa, salicaria, benjamina) are indoor champs, as are Schefflera and Natal Plum (Carissa). Olives will survive, but need to be outside for strong growth. Jerry Meislik is the recognized master of indoor tropicals and describes his experiences with these and other species on his website (https://www.bonsaihunk.us/public_html/) We’ll use Ficus and Schefflera as our examples.



When do tropicals come in? Even with the bay area's great climate, true tropicals need to come in for part of the year. I've heard some experienced growers say they bring tropicals in when night time temperatures drop below 55 F. If I did that, I'd have mine in every night. My microclimate has highs in the 70s and lows around 50 all summer long. Using Ficus and Schefflera as our examples, I bring mine in when the night time temperatures are expected to drop below 40 F. Even that is conservative unless we're talking about extended cold. Just don't leave them out during a frost. Beware! Other tropical species may be more sensitive. Ficus may drop leaves when you bring them in. They may drop leaves when you take them back out. They may drop leaves when you move them from one window to another. Don't panic. They just drop leaves to start over with the right photosynthetic machinery for their new light conditions. They will do best if you can move them to a new location and leave them there while they adjust.



The biggest problem with indoor bonsai is light intensity. Even in a sunny window the glass significantly reduces the amount of light available to plants. A south facing window is best, north facing is worst. A small window also limits the time for direct sun. Obviously, a sunroom or very large windows will increase the hours of direct sun. Ficus and Schefflera can tolerate this pretty easily, but even they will benefit from providing supplemental light. Many people use T5 high intensity fluorescent lights, placed as close to the foliage as they can manage. Remember, light intensity falls off as the square of distance, so you need your lights very close. Trees will benefit from extended hours of artificial light. Consider 18 hours on, 6 hours off. LEDs are getting better, but are still more expensive than fluorescents as an initial purchase. If you want to go crazy you can spend thousands on high intensity lighting, but Ficus and Scheffs don't require it. A bright window will suffice, then add any supplemental lighting you can.

Temperature is another variable. Ficus and Schefflera would love temps in the 80's F but most of us don't find that comfortable in our homes. Both species do OK with temps in the 60's to 70's and a bright window will help warm things up during the day. Avoid drafty spots

that have wide temperature swings when you open an outside door.

Humidity is often the most difficult parameter to get right. Most tropicals would love 60 – 100% relative humidity, but our homes would not. Again, Ficus and Schefflera will tolerate the drier environment in our homes, but will do better if you can devise some barrier around them to increase humidity. "Humidity" trays don't do much to help. The barrier can be as simple as sheets of plastic, an old aquarium, etc. Or you can take a page from indoor cannabis growers and buy a grow tent with zippered doors and a reflective interior surface. I've taken this approach in the past with success, even propagating indoors (bonsai, not cannabis). If you use an enclosure of any kind, a small fan to provide air circulation is a must. In my first winter using a grow tent, WITHOUT a fan, I grew a great crop of wispy, white fungus on everything within a month. I had to take everything out, clean, sanitize, and start over. I included a fan and never had a repeat of my fungus jungle. With the fan, and T5 lights on 18 hrs a day providing extra heat, I maintained the conditions in the tent at 75 – 85 F, and 60 – 80% rel humidity.



Finally, I must admit that with indoor tropicals you will always be battling bugs of some kind. Outdoors our trees benefit from predatory insects and birds as well as great air movement, all of which help to keep pests in check. No matter how well you clean a tree prior to bringing it indoors, bugs will come too. For me these were usually aphids, scale and some kind of tiny gnats. I controlled the gnats by watching for over watering and using adhesive pest strips. For the others I used a systemic pesticide and usually gave each tree one or two showers (with hand picking) over the winter before I got them back outside again.

Indoor bonsai are feasible and can give you something to fuss with when your outside gardening activities wane. Just be sure to set yourself up for success – try Ficus and Schefflera, not junipers and pines!

Show and Tell

And once again we had a super turn out for Show and Tell



Bill Castellon – Star Jasmine



Stephen Lysaght - Suiseki



Lisa Harper – Suiseki in stand



Dennis Mui -??? (If you know what this tree is, do let us know. No one could figure it out.)



Tony Saraceno – Japanese Quince

Bonsai Calendar

- Watering – Water regularly. Don't over-water defoliated trees.
- Fertilizing – Continue regular feeding but stop fertilizing de-candled pines.
- Repotting – Not recommended at this time except for tropical and semi-tropical trees.
- Styling/Pruning – Avoid drastic pruning. Wire uprising branches on quince, ume, oaks, etc. Prune excessive growth on trees.
- 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 NOTE! NEW MEETING PLACE for the summer!

The Merritt College Bonsai workshops will be moved to an alternate location during the summer months when school at the college is not in session. On the fourth Mondays, June 24 and July 22, the workshops will be held from 7-9 pm in the barn at 5716 Balmoral Drive, Oakland, (up the hill from Merritt College). Bring your own tree and tools.

Call 510-220-5303 if you get lost.

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.

Upcoming EBBS Event

November 9, 2019 Sueiseki collecting Black Butte Lake

This is an all-day collecting trip with the SF Club. Black Butte Lake is just west of Orland. Contact Lisa Harper for details if interested. Email: lisaharper@me.com or phone: (510) 220-3339.

Events by Others

August 24 - 25, 2019 Santa Rosa, California

Redwood Empire Bonsai Society (REBS): 36th Annual Bonsai Show, at the Santa Rosa Veterans Building, 1351 Maple Ave. Featuring Bonsai Master Kathy Shaner. Bonsai demonstrations both days, 1- 3 PM. Demonstration tree to be raffled. Largest bonsai and suiseki stone exhibition. Large bonsai vendor and plant sales. Exciting silent auctions. Free admission and parking. Relax with the Bonsai Cafe. Contact Bob Shimon at 707-884-4126 or shimon@mcn.org. Visit our website www.rebsbonsai.org

September 21, 2019 San Andreas, California

Mother Lode Bonsai Club: Fifth Annual Bonsai Exhibition at the San Andreas Public Library, 1299 Gold Hunter Road (off Mt. Ranch Rd.), San Andreas. Show hours are 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Demonstrations at 11 a.m. and 1:30 p.m. with prize drawings immediately following. Vendor and member bonsai-related items will be available for sale. Open to the public with free admission and free parking. For more info, contact Richard McKinstry (209) 288-2330 or email richardwandr@aol.com. Visit club website at www.motherlodebonsai.org.

October 5 – 6, 2019 Thousand Oaks, California

Conejo Valley Bonsai Society: 16th Annual Bonsai Exhibition at the Resource Center at the Gardens of the World, 2001 Thousand Oak Blvd. Show hours are 9 AM – 4 PM with demonstrations in the Bandstand at 1 PM both days. Free Admission. No sales of bonsai related items. For information, call Marj Branson at 805-373-1330 or visit our web site at www.cvbs-bonsai.org

Newsletter Editor: Beverly Martinez
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East Bay Bonsai Society—Schedule for 2019
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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**

Jul	10	Annual Auction
Jul	22	Workshop at the barn on Balmoral Dr
Jul	28	Introduction to Bonsai at BGLM – Michael Jensen-Akula
Aug	10	Annual picnic – hosted by Michael Jensen-Akula
Aug	25	Introduction to Bonsai at BGLM – John Nackley & Bob Gould
Aug	26	Workshop at Merritt College
Sept	11	Lucy Judd – Accent plants
Sept	22	Introduction to Bonsai at BGLM – Janet Nelson
Sept	23	Workshop at Merritt College
Oct	12/13	Show time – no regularly scheduled program
Oct	27	Introduction to Bonsai at BGLM – Tom Colby
Oct	28	Workshop at Merritt College
Nov	13	John Thompson – Oaks
Nov	24	Introduction to Bonsai at BGLM - Michael Jensen-Akula
Nov	25	Workshop at Merritt College
Dec	11	Holiday dinner

Special events

July 10	Annul Auction
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