



The Tree Shrinker

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A MONTHLY BULLETIN

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East Bay Bonsai Society
Meeting: June 12, 2019 7:30 PM

A Thank you from the editor

If you have attended a meeting within the last year, you have probably noticed an abundance of appetizers and other goodies at the back table for our eating pleasure. Some of the goodies are coming from our goody volunteers each month (Thank you!) and some have been coming from a club member who has been outstandingly active in our club.



Brian Brandley, a former member of the Sei Boku Bonsai Club has been enthusiastically participating in bonsai related activity from organizing pyracantha collecting to writing articles and program reviews for the Tree Shrinker newsletter. I don't think Brian ever came to a monthly meeting without a delicious desert his wife had prepared or plants and (again wife's) embroidery as raffle prizes. Brian became a member of the EBBS director's board in 2019 and has been diligently working with the board to pursue new avenues of interest for the club. I first met Brian when he first showed up for a regularly scheduled meeting. Brian was there early setting up chairs! And at his first meeting!

I want to personally thank Brian for his hard work and commitment to EBBS and to bonsai as an art form. Brian is leaving us for a career opportunity in Monterey County where I am sure the local bonsai club will welcome him with open arms. Brian has sent me enough articles to keep the presses rolling through the rest of this year and I am thankful for that as well. So Brian, we will miss you, but good luck in your future and thank you for helping us to be a better club!

Beverly Martinez

Editor – Tree Shrinker

June Program

Our June program will combine the knowledge of two veteran bonsai artists. To help prepare us for the Suiseki and Shohin show scheduled for June 29th and 30th, our own Polly Gould and John Doig will be presenting a program on...*you guessed it!* Suiseki and Shohins!

John Doig will be presenting a program on Shohin, the little trees that are normally below 8 inches tall. John has been working with bonsai for 18 to 20 years and specifically shohin varieties for 15 years. Some of you may know him as "The Wire Guy", as John has been very active in EBBS teaching wiring, setting up for shows and all around helping us novices with bonsais. When asked what he liked best about the shohin he laughed and said "They are easier to carry than the big trees". In addition to EBBS, John currently belongs to the Marin Bonsai Club and the Satsuki Azalea Bonsai Club. He shares a bonsai garden with Janice Dilbeck which boasts not only 300 – 350 bonsai's, but 800 – 900 pre-bonsai trees started from cuttings that are now in the ground. John will be bringing some of his shohin trees and a display stand as part of his set up.



Polly Gould will be enlightening us on the art of Suiseki, or viewing stones. Polly has presented to us previously and most recently on accent plants, which she has in great numbers and varieties. She and husband, Bob, have been active in EBBS for many years and have been collecting Suiseki as part of their bonsai experience. Polly has always been a lover of nature having grown up by a river and a lake. She began suiseki as a hobby in the '80's when she, Bob and Felix Rivera retired and started collecting stones with members from the San Francisco Suiseki Club. Polly will be bringing examples of suiseki and enlightening us



on types of stones and what makes for a quality suiseki.

So get ready for the Suiseki/Shohin show at the end of June by attending the next EBBS meeting where you can ask all of your questions to the experts on these subjects!

In addition to the presentations by John and Polly, we will also have Consignment/Donation sheets and tags for the Plant sale table EBBS will be staffing at the show. A sign-up sheet for anyone wishing to volunteer at the plant sale table will also be available.

Thank you in advance to Don Meeker, Janice Dilbeck and Wendy Quan for providing refreshments for the meeting.

May Program

By: Tom Fedor

On this occasion we were privileged to have Kora Dalager inform us about displaying our bonsai. As noted in last month's Tree Shrinker, Kora has been a bonsai artist for over 30 years. In that time she has been in display workshops with artists such as Kunio Kobayashi in Japan and Mitsuya in Rochester, New York. She has studied with many artists worldwide including Harry Hirao and Ernie Kuo. She is currently a member of the Bay Area Bonsai Association (BABA) and a lifetime member of the San Diego Bonsai Club where she has held the offices of Club Treasurer, Vice President and President. She has chaired the GSBF convention twice, and has been an active travel agent specializing in bonsai tours in Japan for over 20 years.



Kora first recounted some of the early history of bonsai display in Japan, which turns out to be relatively recent compared to the art's long history. For example, the first Kokue-fu Bonsai Exhibition was in the 1920s, at which the trees were "piled in corners" and generally just jumbled. It was good to learn that we're not even a century behind!

It is important to note that bonsai display in a "show" is different from tokonoma display. Were one to visit the Omiya Bonsai Art Museum in the Omiya Bonsai Village near Tokyo, one could see exhibits of the various different formalities of tokonoma display as they developed over the decades.

Originally, it seems, bonsai were never displayed indoors. They were brought indoors only in tokonoma displays. And hence, the origin of the practice of covering pots soil completely with moss. To the Japanese sensibility, soil was perceived as "dirty". Although a tokonoma display is not strictly religious in attitude, the tokonoma is a place of honor where one would not wish to show any dirt.

In contrast to the formal tokonoma with either 2-point or 3-point displays arranged in alcoves next to each other, at one time white boards were placed between the individual trees in Japanese shows to present a series of individualized displays. Nowadays in the US, people use either individual tables or present individual displays side by side on long tables. (So, no problems there, except putting them away at show's end!) In side-by-side displays both in the US and in Japan, trees usually vary a bit in size from one display to the next. But at the Kokeu-fu Bonsai Exhibition in February, one sees strictly separate areas for large trees, medium trees and shohin.

Kora brought with her a large assortment of stands. She stressed the importance of choosing a stand for one's display that works not only in height but also in color and formality, and there followed some lively audience participation matching stands with trees.



For one volunteer's suggestion, for example, the stand's height was critiqued as too similar to the depth of the tree's pot and so technically not optimal. When asked for some general rules of thumb regarding dimensions and proportions, however, Kora demurred. "You have to visually decide whether it works for you."

Kora also brought for discussion a variety of stands for companion plants. Various combinations of trees, stands and companion plants were eagerly mixed and matched by all. Regarding color in particular, Kora noted, one should consider the color of the tree's pot not only with the stand, but also with the color of the companion plant. For contrast with companions, however, one also seeks variation in texture.

But maybe it doesn't matter, because all the "rules" have been broken at one time or another. Even in Japan, apparently, they're doing "modern stuff". (Kids these days, ed.)

But everything (else) in one's display should be subordinate to the main tree. Even in a 3-point display one does not want the two trees to compete too much

with each other. A nice informal pine was seen this evening to not work well with a simply beautiful old rose as they had too much similarity in shape. A more formal pine might have worked better.



Kora introduced a discussion of figurines by recounting how, in displays in Mr. Kunio Kobayashi's Shunkaen Bonsai Museum in Tokyo, she sees no companion plants, only figurines. One can use a lot of different things for figurines, and she had brought a few for practice. A particular figurine was agreed to possess "directional" character requiring a similarly directional tree for company. A crab figurine was argued to be unsuitable with 5-needle pines, for example, but better for a tree naturally growing close to water. The figure of a ram (or maybe it was a sheep, hard to tell) isn't inherently seasonal, for instance, but it might be used in its calendar year, or with a tree evoking a pastoral setting (rather than, say, a pine).

For us to take away, Kora strongly suggests setting up one's show at home before taking it on the road (which, come to think of it, is good advice for any undertaking). She emphasized seasonality as an over-riding interest in composing one's display. Lastly, kids, remember to put your pots on the center of their stands, and your scrolls not too far to one side.

July Program

It's that time again! Our annual auction will be held in place of the regular July meeting. It seems to be a long way into the future, but now is a great time for you to critically evaluate your bonsai collection when all your trees are looking their very best. This is the time to identify trees do not quite meet your expectations and are auction candidates. The July auction is a great way to pass your trees onto other loving and understanding homes and you get 80% of the selling price to spend on more trees. Everything eligible for auction must be worth an opening bid of \$10. Note that other items besides trees are also good auction candidates such as stands, pots and scrolls. So, check through your trees, pottery or other bonsai related possessions to see if there is something of value which can be auctioned. The auction will be held July 10 with set up beginning at 6:00 PM. Watch for more information in the July Tree Shrinker. 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.



Did you know?

By: Suzanne Muller

John Naka performed a demonstration for the EBBS on February 24, 1978 at the Lakeside Park Garden Center, Oakland. The cost for his presentation, \$3.

Review: Bay Area Satsuki Aikokai

By: Tom Colby

The local azalea club, officially Bay Area Satsuki Aikokai, held their annual show in the garden center on May 18 and 19. Most of us like to think about our bonsai as showing restrained elegance, a very Japanese concept. That is a nice way of saying that the color palette of our bonsai trees is pretty limited with only green leaves and brown trunks for the most part. The only relief from this drab scene is blooming deciduous trees in the spring and the leaf color that some of the deciduous trees show in the fall. Enter the satsuki azalea. These trees are breathtaking eye dazzlers with color ranging from white through pink and red to purple. The Azalea family embraces a large number of different species and satsuki's are a group of species that have been bred in Japan to form what is now the satsuki azalea. They get their name because they bloom in the month of the fifth moon, May on our calendar.



The first impression of the show as you walked in was a sea of color which is unique from all other bonsai shows. As usual, the show featured trees in a wide

variety of sizes ranging from shohin to massive trees. One of the principle guidelines for bonsai trees is shape of the tree must be visible and pleasing. Some of the azaleas were so covered with flowers that the shape of the tree could not be seen. On a side note, in Japan there are shows of satsukis that are held occasionally in the fall when the trees are not in bloom so the structure of the trees can be clearly seen. It is amazing what lurks under the flowers.

Azaleas require somewhat different cultural conditions from our usual bonsai trees and the beautifully grown trees on display show that the local folks have mastered them with great success. You probably noticed several trees with both pink and white flowers. One of the quirks of azaleas is that if you want an all pink flowered plant you take a cutting from the branch with a pink flower. A cutting from a white branch will give you a white flower. Strange things these azaleas.

Each azalea tree is in bloom for a week or so and the peak of blooming time is dictated by the weather that previous spring. For example, a warm wet spring can make for an earlier bloom. The club must make reservations for the hall long in advance of the show and long before the spring weather is known. Accordingly the club is always nervous when show time comes. Will the show coincide with peak bloom? Some years they have missed it but this year the azaleas were in full bloom for the show much the relief of all.



A feature of the show was that there was a workshop to be held on Sunday of the show. For about twenty bucks you could attend the workshop and would receive a small tree and be given instruction on how to wire the tree as well as subsequent care of the tree. Sign up for the event was at the show. This was a fine way to encourage new membership in the club.

If you missed the show, you missed a truly spectacular show. If you did attend and you would like to know more about the specific care of these beautiful trees, the local club is currently accepting membership. There are several members of the club who also are members of EBBS. Bob Gould is one contact for more information.

Show and Tell

What a great Show and Tell we had at the last meeting. Here are just a few trees that showed up:



Linda Soliven – Ginkgo



Janet Nelson - Potentilla



Bill Castellen - Rose



Bob Gould - Azalea



John Nackley – Accent plant

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.

Bonsai Calendar

- Watering – Water regularly. Don't over-water defoliated trees.
- Fertilizing – Continue regular feeding.
- Repotting – Not recommended at this time except for tropical and semi-tropical trees.
- Styling/Pruning – Rotate trees. Watch for wire cutting during this period of fast growth. OK to defoliate healthy trees in first part of month.
- Candle - prune black and other hard pines.
- Cuttings – Root softwood cuttings on deciduous trees and Satsuki.
- 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.

Upcoming EBBS Events

June 15, 2019 9am – 1pm Shohin Black Pine Workshop at BGLM with Bill Castellon

\$90.00 cost includes a black pine tree and workshop with Bill. Workshop will take place at the Bonsai garden workshop at Lake Merritt. We can gather together for lunch afterwards if there is interest. Maximum 8 people, there are still slots left.

Contact: Lisa Harper email: lisaharper@me.com or phone: (510) 220-3339.

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

June 1- 2, 2019 San Mateo, California

Sei Boku Bonsai Kai: 36th Annual Show at the San Mateo Garden Center, 605 Parkside Way (next to Beresford Park). Show hours are 10 AM - 4 PM both days with demonstration from 1 – 3 PM. Demo tree will be raffled. Large club member plant sale, vendors, door prizes and our always popular raffles. Admission is free. Dr. Bonsai will be available to offer styling and care tips. For more information contact Marsha Mekisich at eclectic.gardener@yahoo.com.

June 1, 2019 Las Vegas, Nevada

Las Vegas Bonsai Society: Annual bonsai show, "Bonsai in the Desert" at the West Charleston Library, 6301 West Charleston Boulevard. Show hours are 10 AM – 4 PM. Headliner is Todd Schlafer of First Branch Bonsai. He will be conducting a lecture at 11 AM followed by a demonstration at 1 PM. For more information please contact Ira Sisson (206) 852-6510 or irasisson@hotmail.com

June 2, 2019 Las Vegas, Nevada

Las Vegas Bonsai Society: On Sunday, June 2, 2019 Todd Schlafer of First Branch Bonsai will be holding workshops by pre-registration only. For more information please contact Ira Sisson (206) 852-6510 or irasisson@hotmail.com

June 15 - 16, 2019 Livermore, California

Valley Bonsai Society: 11th annual show at Alden Lane Nursery, 981 Alden Lane. Show hours are 10 AM to 4 PM with a demonstration at 1PM on both days. The finished tree will be raffled off at the end of the demonstrations. Bonsai pots, soil, etc. available for purchase. Admission is free.

June 29 - 30, 2019 Oakland, California

San Francisco Suiseki Kai, California Suiseki Society, Bay Area Shohin Society, and California Shohin Society: Inaugural Bay Area Suiseki and Shohin Show at the Lakeside Park Garden Center, 666 Bellevue Ave. Show hours are 11 AM to 5 PM Saturday and 11 AM to 4 PM Sunday. Suiseki Presentation on Sunday at 1 PM. Large vendor area. Members of all Bay Area Bonsai and Suiseki Clubs are invited to exhibit. Clubs can purchase vendor tables for club sales. If you would like to exhibit

be a vendor, please contact Lisa Harper at lisaharper@me.com, or call (510) 220-3339.

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.

Newsletter Editor: Beverly Martinez
Newsletter Reporters: Tom Fedor, Tom Colby, Suzanne Muller
Newsletter Photographer: Suzanne Muller

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.gsbflakemerritt.org/

Meeting Program

Jun	12	John Doig/Polly Gould – Shohin and Suiseki
Jun	23	Introduction to Bonsai at BGLM – Tom Colby
Jul	10	Annual Auction
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

Special events

Jun 29/30 Suiseki and Shohin Show Lakeside Garden Center
July 10 Annul Auction
