



The Tree Shrinker

Volume XXXXVIII, No.3

A MONTHLY BULLETIN

<http://www.eastbaybonsai.org>



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



twitter.com/EastBayBonsai

East Bay Bonsai Society

Meeting: March 13, 2019 7:30 PM

March Meeting

BIO Courtesy of: Janet Nelson Trumm

Once again! We are pleased to present our own Bill Castellon as our demonstrator for the March meeting. Bill will be working on a Princess Persimmon which will be the star of the Benefit raffle at the end of the program.



Bill is a well established landscape contractor in the San Francisco Bay area. He became interested in bonsai as a child when he attended a flower and garden show and was moved by the bonsai on display. He studied with Dennis Makishima and numerous other noted professionals from California and Japan where he has visited on several occasions and briefly studied landscaping there.

By 1991, Bill had joined the East Bay Bonsai Society and served as its President in 1993-1994. Bill has lead numerous workshops on Japanese Black Pines at GSBF conventions, California Shohin Seminars, and bonsai clubs throughout California.

Along with Mas Imazumi, Bill helped construct the rock arrangements in the Bonsai garden at Lake Merritt,

where he is currently in charge of pruning the landscape trees. Bill's talents were recognized with two gold medals and one silver medal for landscape design at the 2000 San Francisco Flower and Garden Show.

For the past eight years, Bill has conducted workshops at Merritt College in Oakland, where he also teaches the "Introduction to Bonsai" course as part of the landscape pruning curriculum. Bill belongs to the East Bay Bonsai Society, Bay Area Bonsai Associates, Aesthetic Pruners Association in Oakland and the Merritt College Bonsai Club which he co-leads with Randall Lee.

Thank you in advance to Ron Sanchez, Randall Lee and John Nackley for providing our refreshments for the evening.



April Meeting

And speaking of Randall Lee...Randall will be our presenter for April. Randall will be working on a Hinoki Cypress which is one of the trees he is noted for. It has been several years since Randall has educated us on Hinoki so you will not want to miss this special opportunity!

February Meeting

Our February regular meeting featured David DeGroot, Curator Emeritus at the Pacific Bonsai Museum in Washington. David has been practicing bonsai since 1972 and has a distinguished resume' including studies under multiple masters in Japan. He's published many articles in bonsai publications around the world, and is author of one of the definitive books on bonsai design, *Principles of Bonsai Design*, now in its second printing.

David presented a comparison and contrast of design principles in Chinese penjing and Japanese bonsai. He described how the art is older in China than Japan. The terms describing the two arts use the same character for the words penjing and bonsai, but these are relatively recent (19th century) in their application to our hobby. Penjing refers to a potted scene or landscape, while bonsai is more likely to focus on a single tree. David used photos from his travels to exhibits in China and Japan to illustrate his discussion on design. It was fascinating to see some of the penjing design techniques that did not use wire in their execution.



In comparing the arts, David said that penjing compositions are often abstractions based on stories and mythology. Most bonsai are abstracted realism that portray trees from nature in their "ideal" state. Penjing often includes figures in the container to add to the story or to reflect some aspect of the tree. In Bonsai figures are used only outside the container in conjunction with a formal display, often to help define a season. Penjing artist view the concept of "natural" as accepting features of the tree as they exist, while the bonsai artist is more likely to use technique to manipulate the tree to attain an ideal mental image. Penjing roots are often natural to the point of looking chaotic, while in bonsai roots are radial and neat. Penjing schools of design are associated with the regions in which they originated. Bonsai is more likely to have schools related to a particular master. Penjing

is more flexible in approaches and styles, while bonsai is more codified with fewer accepted approaches. Display of penjing is more informal with few examples of something similar to a tokonoma display, although David tells us the tokonoma display is a very recent feature in Japan.



David's design for a bonsai tree in the workshop given same day as the program.

Chinese and Japanese cultures are not widely accepting of bonsai and penjing respectively. However, as more international exhibits are organized a more global approach may be emerging. Some Chinese artists with international experience are incorporating more of the Japanese aesthetic in their work. In the west we are more likely to borrow from both approaches. The Japanese tradition is still clear but styles like weeping style, windswept style and windblown style are more likely to be accepted in the west than in Japan. Forest plantings in the US and Europe can approximate penjing. And, of course, we add our own unique flavor with non-traditional tree species and displays.

David was kind enough to add a copy of his book, *Principles of Bonsai Design* to our raffle. The lucky winner was Linda Soliven.



Dues

Some of us like to do things “just in time”, and now the time has come! Dues are due by the March meeting to continue to receive all the benefits of being a member. So if you enjoy receiving this Tree Shrinker newsletter and EBBS special events, be sure to get your dues to Pat Cahill by the 13th of March. The yearly dues are \$30 for single memberships and \$40 for couples. 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.



So don't delay!! We will have the Dues box available at the March meeting or our treasurer, Pat Cahill, will be delighted to receive your check (made out to EBBS) for dues by mail. Just send to: EBBS Treasurer, 4933 Cochrane, Oakland, CA, 94618-2701.

Propagation by Air Layering

By: Brian Brandley

Air layering is a propagation method that generates roots on mature trunks or branches, allowing them to be severed and continue growing as a separate plant. It is similar in principle to taking cuttings, but the connection to the mother plant's roots are not severed initially, thereby maintaining a more reliable source of water while new roots develop. You can propagate branches of much larger diameter than you could using cuttings. This technique provides new plants that have larger trunks and mature bark. If the mother plant is old enough to flower and fruit, the air layered start will continue to flower and fruit. The method can be used to improve the nebari. In short air layering from a mature plant can save you many years in the development of your new bonsai.

Air layering is easier and faster with deciduous trees, but can be accomplished with conifers if you're more patient than I am. I try to select a candidate branch that will have good bonsai characteristics when separated - a tapered trunk, mature bark, and trunk movement. If you're more patient than me, you can even start developing your new trunk, limb placement, wiring, etc before you start the layer. Your ultimate tree will develop and heal faster while still attached to the mother tree. Air layers should be started in late spring/early summer.

To understand the process we need some plant anatomy terms (see Figs 1 and 2). The bark consists of the dead layer at the very outside (the cork) and the cork cambium, living tissue that makes the cork. The next tissue layer is the phloem. This transports photosynthetic products and plant hormones from the leaves down to the roots. Inside of that is the vascular cambium that divides to produce the phloem to the

outside, and the xylem to the inside. The xylem transports water and fertilizer from the roots up to the leaves.

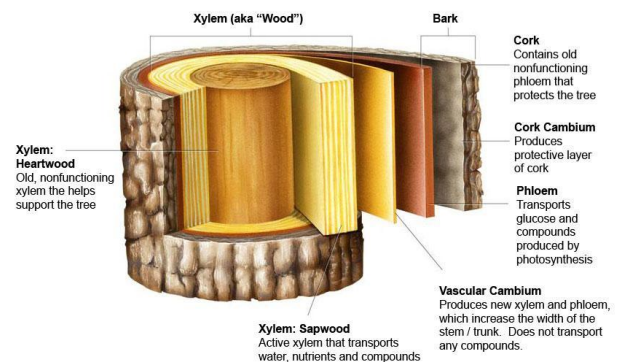


Figure 1

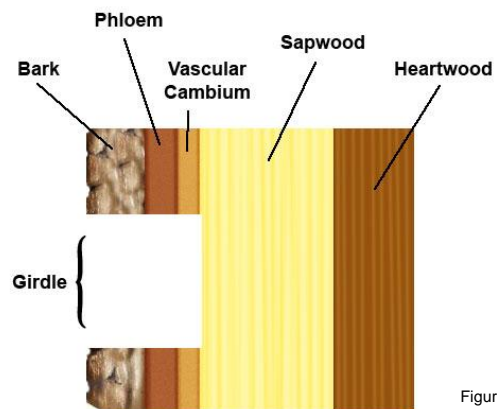


Figure 2

In the process of air layering we want to interrupt the phloem so that sugars and plant hormones build up at our layer site. We do not want to sever the xylem that transports water up the tree. Why are we doing this? With the phloem severed sugars and auxin from the leaves move down the phloem and build up at the site where we cut. Accumulation of these materials stimulates the vascular cambium to first form a callus of tissue, and then develop roots from that callus (see Fig3)

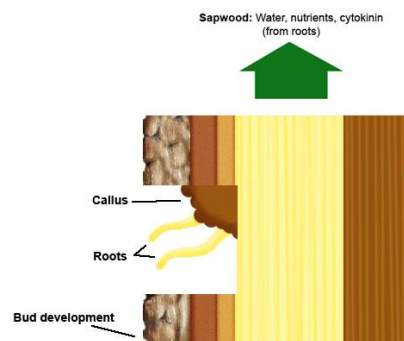


Figure 3

The process is pretty simple. Remove a segment of the bark all the way around the trunk/limb. The upper cut is where the roots will grow. The lower cut should be an

inch or two below the first one. All the bark between the cuts is removed. Yes, this is ring barking the trunk/limb. Don't panic! As long as you don't remove the xylem the plant above the cut will continue to live. Cut deep enough to remove the thin layer of vascular cambium. If any of the vascular cambium remains, the tree may be able to re-establish the phloem connection and heal the wound instead of forming roots.

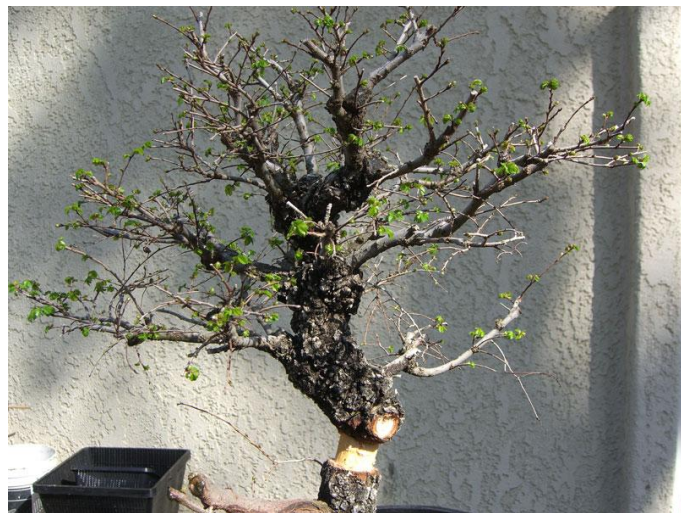


Figure 4

How deep is deep enough, you ask? In most tree species it's pretty obvious when you get through the phloem and reach the vascular cambium. People use different methods to make sure the vascular cambium is completely severed. I usually scrape off all of it I can see using a razor blade or box cutter. Then I use a thin piece of sand paper to abrade the area to be sure I got it all. Then apply rooting hormone to the upper cut. When finished it should look something like the elm in Fig 4.

To provide a moist, protective environment for the roots to grow into, pack the area with moistened sphagnum moss then wrap with plastic cling wrap. I have also tried fashioning a plastic pot to fit around the cut site, filling the pot with regular bonsai soil with a layer of sphagnum moss on top to increase moisture retention. Both methods work.

Now we just have to wait and keep the moss moist. The length of time depends on the tree species, its health, and the amount of foliage above the site. Most deciduous trees seem to push enough roots in four to eight weeks. I'm told conifers can take a year or two. Even though this method may require much of the growing season to accomplish, ultimately it will save you years compared to growing out a cutting or seedling. If my description is confusing you can find an excellent discussion of this method here - <https://www.bonsainut.com/threads/the-science-of-air-layering.27034/> . The author also kindly gave me permission to reproduce his images to illustrate this article.

What happens if it fails? If you cut too deeply and sever the xylem you'll know very soon – everything above the site dies with no water. Usually if the layer fails I only find out after waiting six, eight, twelve weeks, losing patience and opening the layer to have a look. In most failures I was unsuccessful at removing all of the vascular cambium and the tree healed over the wound. Another failure occurs when the tree forms the callus but no roots. That's usually resolved by waiting longer. A third form of failure comes when I get impatient and remove the layer with insufficient roots to support the severed plant.

Let's say everything works, lots of roots are visible and it's time to separate the new plant from the mother plant. Take care not to break off large numbers of the roots during the separation. These roots can still be quite fragile. The best course is to leave the sphagnum moss in place. The roots will be highly tangled in the moss so you can worry about removing the moss at the first repot. Make your cut as close to the point of the newly emerged roots as you dare (Fig 5).



Figure 5

I usually then screw a piece of plywood to the bottom of the new trunk. This helps stabilize the new tree in its pot, and keeps new roots from growing straight down. Treat the new tree like you would a recent repot.



Figure 6

That's it. It actually takes longer to describe than it does to start the air layer. Happy propagating!

Show and Tell

We had a variety of trees this month for show and tell as well as trees displayed from the workshop with David DeGroot earlier in the day.



Dennis Miu



Steve Lysaght



Tim Kong – Collected redwood



Brian Brandley



Michael Hylton

Bonsai Calendar

- Watering – Continue reduced watering, but ensure plants receive sufficient water
- Fertilizing – Do not feed deciduous trees. Begin fertilizing black pines. Delay feeding repotted plants for 2-6 weeks.
- Repotting – Repot deciduous trees, pines, satsuki and junipers
- Styling/Pruning – Prune maples if not pruned in Nov or Dec. Pinch leafing deciduous trees unless trying to redirect growth pattern.
- Graft – All species
- Air Layering – Deciduous trees may be air layered if they have not yet pushed new growth.

Refer to the EBBS Bonsai Calendar for more details on seasonal care.

In Memoriam

By: Tom Colby

Bob Callaham passed away in February of this year at the ripe age of 96 and the local bonsai world lost an influential figure. In past years Bob was active in both the East Bay Bonsai Society as well as the local azalea club. Bob was a professional writer and held an advanced degree in forestry. He brought both professional skills together in the EBBS newsletter where he served as the editor, writer and publisher for many years until his retirement about eight years ago. Under his reign the newsletter always featured well written articles reflecting technical excellence. Bob was proud of the fact that there were people who joined the club simply to get the newsletter back before the newsletters were posted on the internet and the only way of obtaining them was by snail mail of paper copies. Bob also received national acclaim by being the author of two books on bonsai, one a compendium of translations into English of Japanese bonsai terms and the other an esteemed book on satsuki azaleas. In the recent past Bob's health did not permit him to attend regular club meetings so many of the members who recently joined the club did not have a chance to know him which is unfortunate because of his wealth of knowledge. He was a unique character and he will be missed. We all join in remembering Bob for all his many contributions to the bonsai world.

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

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



Bay Area Bonsai Associates

38th Annual Bonsai Exhibit

March 23 & 24, 2019

Lakeside Park Garden Center at Lake Merritt
666 Bellevue Avenue, Oakland, CA

Exhibit Displays, Light Dinner, Demonstrations, Benefit Drawing, Plant Sales.

Demonstration by Club Members.

Saturday, March 23, 5:00PM – 9:00PM [5:00 pm – 6:30 pm:

Exhibit and Plant Sale area open, followed by light dinner. 6:30 pm – 9:00 pm: Demonstration by club members, followed by a raffle of the demo trees (Winning ticket must be present).]

Sunday, March 24, 10:00AM – 4:00PM Exhibit and Plant Sale.

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.

April 6 – April 7, 2019 Sacramento, California

Bonsai Sekiyu Kai: 42nd Annual show will be held at the Sacramento Buddhist Church, 2401 Riverside Blvd. Hours are 10 AM – 4 PM with a demonstration at 2 PM each day by Yuzo Maruyama. Free Admission. Amenities include refreshments, light snacks, door prizes, raffles and a silent auction. Member and vendor sales of plants and bonsai-related items, as well as a food vendor will also be available. For more information contact Bonsai Sekiyu Kai at bonsaisekiyukai@gmail.com

April 6 – April 7, 2019 Santa Cruz, California

The Santa Cruz Bonsai Kai will be hosting their 31st Annual Bonsai Exhibit on April 6 and 7 at the Museum of Art and History (MAH) the same location as the last three years. The show opens at 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. both days. We have the Watsonville Taiko performance on at 11am Saturday and the Nori Project performance at 11am Sunday. We have a demonstration on both days at 2:00 p.m. -- Saturday's demonstrator is Mike Pistello and Katsumi Kinoshita on Sunday.

April 12 – 14, 2019 Tucson, Arizona

Tucson Bonsai Society: 46th Annual Exhibition at the Tucson Botanical Gardens, 2150 N. Alvernon Way. Hours are 9 AM - 4:30 PM daily with demonstrations at 11 AM and 2 PM. Garden admission \$13 adults and \$7 children/students, includes all garden exhibits such as the butterfly greenhouse and Zen garden. Pavilion exhibit will display 40 specimen trees, beginner's area offers up to 30 more. Vendor tent has trees for sale, raffle prizes, locally made pots, Bonsai Basics class registration for three sessions to follow show. Visit our website at tucsonbonsai.org.

April 13 - 14, 2019 Sacramento, California

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 a demonstration by Dennis Makishima at 1:30PM both days. Beginner workshop: Sunday morning from 10 AM - Noon. Large member sales and vendor areas, free admission and plenty of parking. Benefit drawings both Saturday and Sunday, will include each day's demonstration tree and many bonsai and bonsai related items. For additional information visit our website: <http://abasbonsai.org>, or contact Renee Seely at (916) 929-2106, email breadcrumb@comcast.net.

April 13 - 14, 2019 San Jose , California

San Jose Betsuin Bonsai Club: 48th 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. Demonstration at 1 PM by Steve Iwaki on Saturday and Mr. Katsumi Kinoshita from Monterey on Sunday. Club member sales of plants and containers. For information call Carl Morimoto at (408) 296-7660.

April 27 – 28, 2019 Palo Alto, California

Kusamura Bonsai Club: 59th Annual Show, Lucie Stern Community Center, 1305 Middlefield Road. Show hours are Saturday Noon – 5 PM and Sunday 11 AM - 5 PM with a demonstration at 1:30 PM each day (Saturday's demonstration provided by Sam Adina and Sunday demonstration provided by club members). Free admission. 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 28, 2019 Watsonville, California

Watsonville Bonsai Club: 46th Annual Bonsai Exhibit will be held at the Watsonville Buddhist Temple, 423 Bridge St. Show hours are 11 AM - 4 PM, with a demonstration by award winning Bonsai Master Katsumi Kinoshita at 1:30 PM. Over 50 outstanding large, small, young and old bonsai 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. Member / Vendor Sales area. For more information contact Michael Anderson at (831)247-9028 or margiesmemories@aol.com.

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, Tom Colby

Photographer: Suzanne Muller

East Bay Bonsai Society—Schedule for 2019

Regular Meetings: Second Wednesday, every month (except July, 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

Mar	13	Bill Castellon – Princess Persimmon
Mar	24	Introduction to Bonsai at BGLM – Michael Jensen-Akula
Mar	25	Workshop at Merritt College
Apr	10	Randall Lee – Hinoki Cypress
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	Polly Gould – Suiseki and John Doig - Shohin
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

June 29/30 Suiseki and Shohin show Lakeside Park Garden Center