



The Tree Shrinker

Volume XXXXVIII, No.11

A MONTHLY BULLETIN

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East Bay Bonsai Society
Meeting: November 13th 2019 7:30 PM

Message from your president

Wow what a great show! I was struck by the high quality of the show trees and the artistic displays. I really enjoyed chatting with many of you and sharing our common bonsai interest. Our Annual Show requires a lot of planning and hard work, and we could not do it without the many members who volunteered their time and energy. I would like to thank all the volunteers who greeted people at the front table, who helped sell our member trees, who manned the security so that none of our trees went missing, who manned the kitchen and kept us fed, and the many strong people who helped set up and take down the show.

There were a few people who really went above and beyond this year to make the show possible, and I want to give them a special THANK YOU. Suzanne Muller managed all the details of Sergio's visit and demo including selecting and caring for the trees, and procuring tools, wire, a screen and projector for the presentation. She also organized the kitchen crew! Beverly Martinez laundered and ironed all the table cloths before the show. She also organized and manned the Club sales for the whole weekend. Roger Brady hosted Sergio at his home, and took him on the Grand Tour of the Bay Area on Friday, and organized the security team. Pat Cahil kept track of all the show income and expenditures. Janice Dilbeck, John Doig, Bob and Polly Gould, John Nackley, Janet Nelson and Rick Trumm all lent their considerable expertise, and tolerated my numerous calls for advice. Lastly, I want to thank all the EBBS members who put significant time into show preparation and production.

I am really proud to be a member of this club, and that's because of all of you- our fantastic EBBS members! We work together well, we have fun doing it, and together we keep learning about our common passion- bonsai! Lisa Harper

November meeting

We are pleased and excited to have John Thompson back once again to speak to us about oaks. John will be presenting a two-part program. First, he will be passing out and going over his Bonsai Care and Development Considerations template. This is a graphic chart on how to recognize your particular tree, where it is in development, what operations you have to choose from and when they can be used. He will concentrate on oaks but it can be utilized for any bonsai material. Second, he will work on a fairly simple 5-gallon oak for the raffle. Time permitting, he can critique members' oaks and give suggestions for enhancing their design. John Thompson (JT) is a bonsai enthusiast, lecturer,



demonstrator and artist who lives in San Jose, CA. Nature, John Naka, Kathy Shaner, Harunobu Tokita in Japan, Boon Manakativipart, Ryan Neil and many others, have influenced his eye and passion for Bonsai. He has served on the board of directors for both the American Bonsai Society (ABS) and the Golden State Bonsai Federation (GSBF).

JT has demonstrated, taught, and led workshops at conventions and many club programs. He writes a monthly care column for several Bay Area clubs and has authored articles for ABS, GSBF and other publications. In his workshops and demonstrations, he tries to utilize the unique characteristics or flaws in each tree that will set it apart from others of the same species. He emphasizes transplanting, wound healing, grafting and effective pruning and wiring in the process of developing bonsai.



JT's experience and bonsai collection encompass a wide range of species and styles. He is, perhaps, best known for his driving passion for oak bonsai, Sierra junipers, boxwoods, pines and other collected trees. Touching, and enjoying his trees, if only for a few moments, is one of the best parts of his day.

There was no sign-up for goodies for the November meeting, so Thank you in advance to all of you who will be bringing snacks to share.

October show

The October show was once again well received in the community and a pleasure to be a part of. 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. The headliner is expected to provide a learning experience for all of us and Sergio Cuan delivered with a PowerPoint presentation on Saturday on deciduous trees to a captivated audience. On Sunday, Sergio led a fine critique of the show in the morning and teamed up with John Doig to demonstrate the creating of bonsais from two trees that kept the audience entranced.

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,, Safeway (on Grand Avenue) Noah's Bagel, Starbucks and Chipotle Cafe 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. And a special thanks to Tony Sarceno for his donation of his own wine not only for the volunteers enjoyment, but also 12 bottles in the Silent Auction that netted the club \$125.

The demo trees were amazingly changed giving hope to those of us newbies uncertain of what to do with our trees. The trees were procured earlier in the year and have been stabled waiting for their proud moment. Here they are in transition.

Congratulations to the winners of the demo trees. Adam Kleinberg of EBBS winning the Trident Maple and Janet Nelson of EBBS winning the Cork Bark Elm.



Trident Maple

Cork Bark Elm

Before the demo



After demo



For those who couldn't make it to the show, here are some of the bonsai displays you missed:



Pyracantha



Ginkgo forest



Junipers



Bougainvillea



Junipers



Olive grove



Pomegranate



Japanese Maple



Juniper forest



The shohin and mame displays were quite amazing.



Thanks to the many EBBS members who worked the show.



and finally, a few Tokonoma's



Leyland Cypress



Black Pines



Lodge Pole Pine



Shimpaku



Shimpaku Bunjin



Pine

California Oaks

By: Brian Brandley

There are about 20 species of oak trees native to California. They can be broadly divided into the white oak group (think valley oak, *Quercus lobata*) and the red oak group (think coast live oak, *Q. agrifolia*). Within each of these groups the species widely hybridize with each other, making species identifications a matter for experts. Confusing the matter further the leaf trees, and even within a single mature tree from the top to bottom of the crown. We also have the tan "oak" in northern California, which looks like an oak and produces acorns, but is not a true oak (genus *Notholithocarpus*). <http://www.bssf.org/articles-and-stories/august-general-meeting-2/>
https://ucanr.edu/sites/oak_range/Californias_Rangeland_Oak_Species/

So, for the purposes of this short article I'll use *Q. lobata* as an example of the white oak group, and *Q. agrifolia* as an example of the red oak group. I'll skip the tan oak since I haven't seen much on its bonsai potential, but I'll also briefly discussed *Quercus suber*, the cork bark oak, even though it's not a California native. It does so well here we should consider it an adopted child.



Quercus lobata (valley oak) is the largest North American oak. It grows in the river valleys of California below 2,000 ft elevation. Its leaves are highly lobed and look more like most eastern oaks than many of the California species. It requires abundant water, and spends most of its energy early on developing a deep root system. It can easily be grown from acorns, but the root system should be pruned each year. If you let it go several years it will require a hard prune of thick roots, putting significant stress on the young plant. The leaves on a mature tree are large, but with proper management they will reduce significantly. The valley oak is less susceptible to sudden oak death (*Phytophthora*) than the red oaks. It's dominance in the California landscape is threatened by livestock grazing (fewer new trees from acorns) and a general lowering of the water table.

<https://www.fs.fed.us/database/feis/plants/tree/quelob/al.html>



The coast live oak (*Quercus agrifolia*) is much more commonly seen as bonsai. It is a member of the red oak group, and hybridizes broadly with other red oaks. Its leaves are more in scale for bonsai and will reduce further. They usually have a spikey edge, but with a variable shape. Coast live oak is very common within about 60 miles of the coast, and under 2,000 ft elevation. It can be grown easily from acorns, or collected in late winter through spring. Collectors recommend that most of the foliage be removed after collecting to manage water loss. It back buds extremely well. The tree makes use of extensive, horizontal roots near the surface, which makes it the least drought tolerant of California oaks. It is, however, quite fire resistant. It is, however, highly susceptible to sudden oak death (*Phytophthora*).

Phytophthora is a soil dwelling pathogen related to algae, and found extensively in California's fog belt. Other plants host the pathogen in foliage, but oaks get infected trunks that quickly lead to the tree's death. You can read more about it here:

<http://ipm.ucanr.edu/PMG/PESTNOTES/pn74151.html>
Treatment of forest trees is problematic, but fortunately for us preventative treatments are possible for pot grown trees. A product called Agri-Fos is available (https://www.amazon.com/Monterey-Agri-Fos-Disease-Control-Fungicide/dp/B0018C6N14/ref=sr_1_1?ie=UTF8&qid=1539820523&sr=8-1&keywords=agri-fos&dpID=51uCQBvL7FL&preST=_SY300_QL70_&dpSrc=srch)

Members from many of the local bonsai clubs have excellent examples of what can be done with the coast live oak. There are many large, dramatic trees to view (see the Lake Merritt bonsai collection), but I can say from personal experience that *Q. agrifolia* can be worked as shohin very easily.

Finally, the cork oak, *Quercus suber*, is included here as an honorary California oak because it is such a rock star for our bonsai community. It is native to Portugal, Spain and other parts of the western Mediterranean, and is the source of commercial cork for wine corks, etc. This material is commonly available locally, and is prized for the exuberant corked bark on the trunk and major limbs. It can be a little touchy about initial root work so take care in the transition from nursery pot to a training pot. It takes to pot culture and back buds extremely well.

Trees can have a bit of a reverse taper right at the soil like, as the corked bark doesn't develop below the soil surface. But once exposed it barks up again. Most cork oaks you'll see are fairly large bonsai, but the trunks will cork up at a relatively young age (thumb sized diameter), so shohin are certainly possible.



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 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 Events

DATE CHANGE!! November 10, 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

November 9, 2019 Las Vegas, Nevada

Las Vegas Bonsai Society: Viva Las Bonsai: A Bonsai Exhibit and Show at the Nevada Garden Center, Northwest corner of Lorenzi Park, 800 Twin Lakes Drive from 10 AM to 4 PM. Bonsai Demonstration by Jan Culek, professional bonsai artist from the Czech Republic. Discussion on Zen and the Arts by Zen Master Ji Haeng. Bonsai Exhibit of Society member trees. Local vendor sales of bonsai related items and club tree sale. Parking and admission is free but donations are welcome. Raffle and silent auctions immediately following the demonstration. For further information contact irasisson@hotmail.com.

November 23rd, 2019 Clovis, California

Fresno Bonsai Society will conduct their eleventh consecutive bonsai yard sale from 8 AM until 2 PM at the Clovis Botanical Garden. The garden is located at 945 North Clovis Avenue in Clovis. The sale will be held under and around the big tent area. The event is free and the parking is free. Vendors of bonsai, pots and all related items are welcome free of charge. Everyone is welcome to buy, sell, or trade. There will be bonsai from both private collections and from the GSBF Clark Bonsai Collection. There will be used pots, hand-thrown pots from local potters. Look for books and magazines and display stands. The coffee is free and sandwiches will be available for \$10. Come early for the best deals. Vendors are very welcome. Please contact Mike Saul (tinytreeme@sbcglobal.net) for assistance. This is an entertaining event every year and a wonderful opportunity for new bonsai hobbyists to acquire better quality material for very reasonable prices.

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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

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