



The Tree Shrinker

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A MONTHLY BULLETIN

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East Bay Bonsai Society

Meeting: September 11, 2019
7:30PM – 9:30 PM

September Meeting

We are pleased to announce that Lucy Judd will be presenting at our September meeting. Lucy is well known in the bonsai and accent plant world. Her presentation will be in two parts. First, Lucy will demonstrate how to make and care for both accent plants and kusamono. Accent plants are typically a single plant in a pot and kusamono is a group planting which usually involves several different plants to create a scene. While kusamono plantings are fairly often seen in Japan, they are not seen often in the United States, so the demonstration will be a unique opportunity for us.



The second part of the evening is a special treat. Lucy will lead a hands-on mini-workshop in which you create your own accent plant. For this you may want to bring supplies including gloves, a chopstick, a spray bottle, small pots (proportional to the bonsai you wish to bring

to the display in October), and a box or other container to take home your new plants. There will be pots available for purchase at \$5.00 each. Lucy will bring the necessary soil, plants and technique for this wonderful opportunity to learn the art and craft of accent plants.



Accent plants are the unsung heroes of a bonsai show, and although our focus is on the trees, accent plants really set off the trees. We are fortunate to have a program on accent plants just in time for our show in October.

Annual Potluck Picnic

This year our annual picnic was held at the home of Michael and Marilyn Jensen-Akula in the Oakland hills overlooking the San Francisco Bay. Although the weather was a little humid, the day turned out beautiful. The food (as always) was a wonderful mix of specialties from our member's kitchens. From the backyard there is a panoramic view of the Golden Gate and Bay bridges. And the garden with its turtle pond and different levels of plantings is amazing.

If you missed it, we hope you can join us next year, you won't be disappointed. Thank you, Michael, and Marilyn for hosting this year. Here are a few pics to highlight the day.



View from the backyard



Home entrance



Bob and Polly Gould



Ernie Katler and Tom Fedor



Ernie Katler, Suzanne Muller, Michael Jensen-Akula and Gary Anderson



Black Pine and Pear



Janet and Rick Trumm



Pat Cahill, Suzanne Muller and Janet Nelson-Trumm



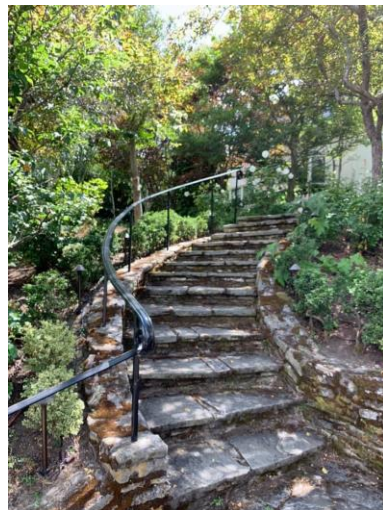
John and Karen Nackley



Tom and Ellen Fedor



Stephen Lysaght and Lisa Harper



October SHOW TIME is almost here!

It's our time to shine in the bonsai community! October seems to be a long way off, but it will be here before you know it. Now is the time to be looking at your collection and selecting which trees you would like to display. The EBBS Board hopes that everyone will display at least one tree. Your best tree or trees will be most welcome regardless of whether it is a humble Juniper or a spectacular finished bonsai. Each and every tree in the show makes a contribution to the overall success of the show. Now is also the time to be sure that the pot compliments the tree and that you have a stand for the tree. If not, there are usually extra stands available at the show setup, but bear in mind that they may not do your tree full justice.



You may have noticed at the recent August potluck that John Nackley was busy gathering volunteers for the show. The show takes all hands to run smoothly so have your pens loaded, locked, and at the ready so you can sign up to help with the show at the September meeting.

Following are the contacts for each area that will need volunteers. You may contact them directly to volunteer or sign up at the September meeting.

Security and Docents –
Reception table -
Plant and bonsai material sales -
Bev Martinez (Martinez_Bev@yahoo.com)

Hospitality (food, beverage & kitchen) –
Suzanne Muller (smuller@mbcf.com)

Kids corner –
Lisa Harper (lisaharper@me.com)

If you wish to reserve a tokonoma, either sign up for one at the next meeting or contact Janice Dilbeck at janicedilbeck@comcast.net.

Our show also features a plant sale. Now is the time to select plants that you would like to sell. Many of the visitors to the show will see bonsai for the first time and are eager to buy small trees. They are especially interested in plants that cost less than ten dollars such as those that were not eligible for sale in our recent auction.

Because the show is in the same week as our regular meeting, the October meeting is canceled so that you will have time to prepare for the show.

Ficus

By: Brian Brandley

I've moved to six different climates since I started bonsai and some of my topical's are the only trees that have made all the moves with me. Trees that can survive inside can be managed in most climates. *Ficus* are probably the most common tropical/subtropical bonsai subject, and the most common indoor bonsai. Still, in California it's not been uncommon to have an experienced bonsai club member look at a *Ficus* that I've brought to a workshop and advise me to get some "real" bonsai material. *Ficus* don't always get respect out here despite characteristics that make them nearly ideal bonsai subjects. In the Florida bonsai community, I think you're legally required to grow *Ficus*! Having spent more than my share of time in tropical rainforests I still have fond memories associated with banyan style trees, aerial roots and buttressed trunks. I use *Ficus* to scratch that itch. While one can style a *Ficus* like a pine, why would you? Jerry Meislek (<https://www.bonsaihunk.us/>) is one of the best-known experts regarding *Ficus* for bonsai, particularly for indoor growing. His website has tons of great information and photos. He has published perhaps the definitive book on the subject (<https://www.bonsaihunk.us/book/BackInPrint/USorderSoft.html>). Florida artist Adam Levine demonstrates lots of *Ficus* techniques on his blog (<https://adamaskwhy.com/>).



Ficus salicaria

There are hundreds of *Ficus* species, but there are a handful that are commonly used in bonsai in the US. *Ficus microcarpa* is what most people think of when referring to *Ficus* bonsai. These are native to southeast Asia but have been used as street trees and in gardens in Florida and Southern California. There are many varieties of *F. microcarpa*, but the most common are Green Island (smaller, rounder leaves) and Tiger Bark (white stripes on a grey background bark). Other common species used for bonsai include *F. salicaria* (willow leaf *Ficus*), *F. benjamina*, *F. burtt-davyi* (S. African), *F. ingens* (red leaf *Ficus*, S. African), and *F. rubiginosa* (Port Jackson fig, Australian).



Ficus burtt-dayvii

Ficus salicaria have a leaf shape most people don't associate with *Ficus*, but they make great bonsai material. *F. benjamina* are common house plants but tend to be a bit harder to manage for bonsai than *microcarpa* or *salicaria*. *F. burtt-dayvii* has probably the smallest leaves of any *Ficus*. It's slow growing though so it's tough to find one with a large trunk. The red-leaved *Ficus ingens* is a strong grower with trunks that bulk up quickly. The leaves are red when they emerge, but the don't reduce that well. It's probably the easiest of the bunch to propagate from cuttings. The Port Jackson fig has larger leaves that don't reduce easily. It's probably best suited for a larger sized bonsai.

While each species has its peculiarities, *Ficus* in general are tolerant of low light conditions and low humidity found in most homes. They thrive in high light, humid conditions and most will produce aerial roots if the humidity is kept consistently high. Rootbound trees seem to produce more aerial roots than trees comfortable in their pots. Most will readily strike from cuttings done during the growing season. They air layer easily and some (not *F. microcarpa*) can be propagated from root cuttings. Trees are best repotted in summer during their active growing season. They occasionally suffer from scale, but few other US bugs want to deal with their latex sap. Speaking of latex sap, if you have a latex allergy this is probably not the tree for you.



Ficus microcarpa

Ficus can be designed in any style but I think they shine when used to emulate rainforest trees. They work well as banyan style with aerial roots and multiple trunks. They can be used to rapidly create root-over-rock styles, or an epiphyte style on a dead trunk – a tropical tanuki if you will. They are amenable to fusion techniques to create a thicker trunk (or limb) from multiple small ones. They can do well with very little space for their roots. Most species ramify well. *Ficus* bonsai got a bad reputation when box stores were flooded with cookie cutter, mass produced trees. These were typically an S-curve design, or the “ginsing” ficus with big, bulbous roots. They often came with gravel glued to the surface of the soil for ease in shipping. *Ficus* bonsai don't have to look this way! To see some of the best *Ficus* bonsai look to Taiwan

(<https://www.pinterest.com/pin/419397784046335173/>)

Bonsai Calendar

- Sun – gradually move shaded deciduous trees into sun to promote fall color.
- Watering – Water regularly, but don't over-water.
- Fertilizing – Use low or zero nitrogen fertilizers.
- Repotting – Begin repotting redwood, shimpaku and quince after mid-month. Begin repotting flowering and fruiting varieties of prunus.
- Styling/Pruning – Remove seed pods and dry fruit. Do not wire deciduous trees until leaves drop. Renew pinching junipers and severely prune one last time this season.
- Insect and disease control – Maintain defensive treatments for fungus. Remove dead plant material. Watch for and treat insect infestations.
- Propagating/Collecting – Last opportunity to take hardwood cuttings from deciduous trees. Last opportunity to remove air-layers this year.

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 510-864-0841.

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

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

October 5 – 6, 2019 Menlo Park, California

John and Sandy Planting whom have been involved in bonsai for over 60 years, are selling trees, pots, tools, scrolls, ikebana containers and more. Saturday 10 -4, Sunday 10 – 3. Free terracotta pots and stones. No early birds, bring your own wagon. Cash, checks, credit cards accepted. Location: 898 Coleman Ave. Menlo Park (limited street parking). Contact Lynne O'Dell for questions at Lynnemo@sbcglobal.net.

October 12 - 13, 2019 Oakland, California

East Bay Bonsai Society: Annual Show at the Lakeside Park Garden Center at Lake Merritt, located at 666 Bellevue Avenue. Show hours are Saturday 10 AM - 5 PM and Sunday 10 AM - 4 PM with a demonstration at 1PM on Sunday by Sergio Cuan, notable bonsai artist awarded the "finest deciduous bonsai" at the US National Bonsai Exhibition. There will also be a benefit drawing and sale of bonsai and related materials. For additional information, visit www.eastbaybonsai.org.

October 19, 2019 Cupertino, California

Midori Bonsai Club: 58th Annual Show at the Quinlan Community Center, 10185 N. Stelling Rd. Show hours are 10 AM – 5 PM with demonstration by John Thompson at 1:30 PM and demonstration tree raffled off afterwards. Enjoy our new location and show room with over 60 trees on display. Show will include many vendors selling bonsai related items. Included a large club tree sale, and Doctor Bonsai will be their for guest who bring in a outside bonsai trees. Formal in class bonsai school for outsiders at 10 AM who want to purchase a bonsai starter tree for a nominal charge. Free admission, and plenty of free parking outside the building facility. For further information contact: Jack Christiansen (408) 280-7539, or Jackchristiansen@sbcglobal.net.

October 19th and 20th Sacramento, California

Capital City Bonsai Association: 20th Anniversary of the Association's Bonsai and Suiseki Show. In Loving Memory of Gary Judd. Mini demos 10 – noon, Demo's 1 – 3:30 PM. Benefit drawing, member sales, vendor sales, silent auction, free parking. Location: Shepard Garden & Arts Center 3330 McKinkey Blvd, Sacramento, Ca.95816. Sponsered by: American Bonsai Assc, Sac., Bonsai Sekiyu Kai, Sacramento Bonsai Club & Satsuki Aikokai. For more information contact:pbholtzen@sbcglobal.net.

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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

Sept 11 Lucy Judd – Accent plants workshop
Sept 22 Introduction to Bonsai at BGLM – Janet Nelson
Sept 23 Workshop at Merritt College
Oct12/13 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