



The Tree Shrinker

Volume XXXIX, No.2

A MONTHLY BULLETIN

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East Bay Bonsai Society Monthly Meeting February 12, 2020

February meeting

At our February meeting Eric Shrader past president of the Bonsai Society of San Francisco (BSSF) will be presenting on Root over Rock plantings.

Eric is an artist, grower, writer, photographer and teacher. Well known in the bay area, Eric provides three types of "Bring your own tree" workshop at his home in Bernal Heights.



On his website, Phutu Bonsai Life, Eric Provides Blogs on various subjects including trees, processes, styles, shows, how-tos and other inspirational topics, Eric is an accomplished photographer as evidenced on his website

Eric's demonstration should prove to be enlightening as well as entertaining.

Thank you in advance to Janet and Rick Trumm, Mike Jensen-Akula and Patty Coyle for providing refreshments for the February meeting.

March meeting

We are pleased to announce that Gordon Deeg will be presenting on a favorite topic; Camelias. As many of you know, Gordon is a well accomplished bonsai artist and the current Garden Director at the Bonsai Garden at Lake Merritt (BGLM).



Gordon is always informative and helpful with beginning students. In recent years Gordon has presented on tool sharpening and care and served as a headliner for the East Bay Bonsai Society show. Gordon's extensive knowledge on Camelias should prove to be a very worthy evening.

January meeting

In a timely presentation for this New Year, local bonsai artist, teacher and prolific blogger Jonas Dupuich taught us everything we need to know to get our trees into and out of bonsai pots. As noted in last month's Tree Shrinker, a serendipitous encounter with Boon Manakitivipart in 1993 led Jonas to more than two decades of study with him as well as two months in 2011 with Mr. Junichiro Tanaka in Nagoya, Japan.

After a plug for his forthcoming book release, the first portion of his program was a general discussion of repotting bonsai trees. Anecdotally, the longest member's repotting time was "all day". Yay, Janet! Jonas once put in a day and a half on a cork oak (10 – 20 yrs. old). A root needed chiseling to get it out of the pot. End of day one, and it was good. The next half day took up more root work and the actual repotting. He led a group discussion of various indications when repotting is needed (including pot breakage!), ranging from drainage and consequent root and foliage health to mere whimsy. Repotting is especially useful for slowing the growth of shohin bonsai.

Jonas had prepared various cardboard shapes to represent pots with one, two, three and four holes. (if your pot has none, drill some.) He played a walking talking blog himself this evening, treating us to personal insights into his technique. The method of best securing a leaning or cascading tree in such a pot elicited oohs and ahhs from the audience (and will not be revealed here. Do your own research!).



He did mention to fasten tiedowns not too tight, so as not to harm the roots or break the wire. Tighten just so the tree doesn't move in the pot. Cross two wires on one side of the tree, two on the opposite side, and tighten each crossed pair; especially avoid crossing one pair over the other. It's ineffective as well as unattractive.

His method for four-hole pots, in particular, is also featured in an Appendix to our EBBS Bay Area Calendar for Bonsai Care (yay, Janice!), soon to be re-released in an exciting new format! The very last wire connection is the only one that needs tightening with pliers, and the others only need to be finger tight secure. Way cool!

Chopsticks are popular for assisting with root ball tiedown, and propping up a root ball in a pot, if required. A second chopstick should be applied at this time to the opposite side as well, cut to fit as a brace between tree and pot. Jonas finds that trees people bring him often

need chopstick prop-ups, whereas his own trees seldom do, reflecting a difference in general root health. A dwarf wisteria was chosen as victim for Jonas's repotting demonstration. He removed it from its pot exactly like on TV (err, I mean, on the internet!). He specified the importance of leaving about 1/4 inch of fine roots protruding from bottom of the root ball to ensure that the new roots enter the new soil. Many trees otherwise tend to swirl their roots around the ball they already inhabit rather than venturing out. Firm root balls, like this one tonight, can be perforated (with a Phillip's head screwdriver, no less!) to loosen them a bit.



The rest of the evening was taken up with a lively group discussion of the suitability of the various pots Jonas brought to offer for the wisteria's new look. The only prerequisite is that the new pot should be slightly larger than the old. The august assembled body continued its debate until closing time, and beyond. The interested reader is encouraged to see how Jonas resolved the matter when the poor tree (and your humble correspondent) finally got a drink by turning to his January 10th blog post, fully illustrated, with an even broader choice of bonsai pots than had been hauled out to Lake Merritt:

<https://bonsaitonight.com/2020/01/10/pot-selection-exercise-dwarf-wisteria/>



Potting Party

Thanks to everyone that came out for our January Potting Party. And special thanks to Janice Dilbeck and John Doig for leading and assisting the potters, and to Lisa Harper for setting the workshop up. We had seven members join us and repotted 11 trees. We learned a lot and had some fun along the way. Watch the Tree Shrinker Newsletter for more future workshops.



Questions and Answers

By: Beverly Martinez

At our January meeting a question was posed: "Why are pots not glazed inside or on the bottom? Does it matter? As a hobby potter, I didn't know the exact reason beyond what I have heard – it's better for the plants, etc. So, I went in search of an answer. I asked the question to a group on Facebook titled Pottery Heads. Low and behold, Michael Ryan Bell, the well-known pottery historian, answered me.

"It's a tradition dating back to antiquity, when glazes often contained chemicals that could leach and hurt the tree; copper, lead, etc." So, wherever there is soil, the glaze is omitted.



Even though we do not use lead today, copper or other metals and chemicals can be used. So, it is still a good idea to not glaze the inside or bottoms of the pots. The only time you might want to use it, is in the use of earthenware which is porous in nature and will be more fragile if not glazed completely.

Dues are Due

Dues are now due for the year of 2020. If you are new to EBBS and joined after October 1st, 2019 then your dues are good for 2020. If you joined before October 1st, 2019 then another year of dues is owed. There will be a box at the next meeting in February where you can drop off your dues or you can mail a check (sorry no credit cards) to:

EBBS Treasurer
C/O Pat Cahill
4933 Cochrane Ave
Oakland, CA. 94618-2701

Single member \$30.
Family or partner \$40.
Request newsletter by postal service \$10.

Show and Tell

We had a great turn-out at the January meeting. And as always, some really nice plants were displayed at the Show and Tell section. If you are wondering how you too can display your plant or bonsai artwork, just bring it to the next meeting. It can be a fabulous tree or a tree you need help with. Show and Tell is where we educate each other on our own personal bonsais and displays.



Bob Gould – Japanese Apricot (Mume)



Lisa Harper - Olive

Show and Tell (cont.)



Randall Lee – Juniper on Rock



Tony Saraceno – Princess Persimmon

Reminder! The annual Mammoth Auction and Fundraiser will be held February 15th and 16th. See details in Events by Others!

Eleagnus (Silverberry)

By: Brian Brandley

Elagnus, or silverberry is a broadleaf, evergreen shrub, with species from Asia, Europe and North American. The most common species used in bonsai are *E. multiflora* (also known as gumi berry) and *E. pungens*. *Pungens* has thorns. Russian olive is also an *Elagnus* and is considered an invasive pest in some areas. There is a North American native (*E. commutate*) that is hardy to zone 2. *Elagnus*' best feature is the dark green foliage spotted with silver flecks that give the genus its name. The flowers and berries are in bonsai scale and also sprinkled with silver. The fruit is edible.



Elagnus is often planted as a hedge and has those good hedge characteristics that make good bonsai. It responds well to pruning, back budding prolifically, and doesn't seem to mind aggressive root work. It can often be found in the nursery trade. New growth runs arrow straight for a long distance, so wire when still flexible, or use clip and grow techniques. The leaves are naturally 1 to 4 inches long but will reduce to 1 inch or less. *Elagnus* propagates easily from cuttings. These are nitrogen fixing plants which should make them hardier than most in inorganic soils. They also tolerate coastal exposure.



As you can see below, the somewhat large leaves make them a good choice for larger bonsai. Since they are used in hedges, it's possible larger examples may be found in urban collecting opportunities. Surprisingly, with some work the leaves can be reduced sufficiently to create credible shohin. Overall these are great looking plants that seem to be under represented in 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 510-864-0841.

Events by Others

February 15 and 16, 2020 Oakland, California Annual Bonsai Garden at Lake Merritt Mammoth Auction & Sale will be held on Saturday, February 15 and Sunday, February 16, 2020 at 666 Bellevue Ave., Lakeside Park Garden Center in Oakland. You are invited to the biggest auction and sale of bonsai, pre-bonsai, pots, books, stands, art, and jewelry. It is a giant fundraiser with all proceeds going to support the Bonsai Garden at Lake Merritt. Saturday auction preview starts at Noon with auction starting at 1:00 p.m. Sunday sale 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m., vendors, plant sale, and much more. Purchase your bonsai needs. For further information, contact George Haas, at gwhaas@comcast.net or visit web site <https://www.bonsailakemerritt.com>.

February 22 and 23, 2020 San Marino, California Golden State Bonsai Federation Collection at the Huntington: Bonsai-A-Thon XXIV will be held at Botanical Center Building The Huntington Library, Art Museum and Botanical Gardens 1151 Oxford Road. GSBF Early Bird Passes - Bonsai Club Members 7:30 AM - 5:00 PM General Public 10:00 AM - 5:00 PM. Event includes extensive bazaar area, bonsai exhibit, bonsai workshops for children and adults (pre-registration required), demonstrations, daily raffle and auction, guided tours, and pancake breakfast for BAT participants at 7:30 AM daily.

March 28 – 29, 2020 San Jose, California San Jose Betsuin Bonsai Club: 49th Annual Spring

Exhibit at the San Jose Buddhist Church Betsuin, 640 North Fifth Street. Hours are 11:00 AM – 5:00 PM Saturday and Noon – 4:00 PM Sunday. Demonstration at 1:00 PM, both days with guest demonstrator David Nguy on Saturday and a club member demonstration on Sunday. Club sales of plants and pots. Vendor sales include West America (June and David Nguy) and Bonsai Fusion. For further information, call Bob Shatsky (408) 353-3239 or Susan Yea (408) 464-7340.

April 4 – 5, 2020 Sacramento, California

Bonsai Sekiyu Kai: 43rd Annual Show will be held at the Sacramento Buddhist Church, 2401 Riverside Blvd. Hours are 10:00 AM – 4:00 PM with a demonstration at 2:00 PM, both days by Yuzo Maruyama. Free Admission. Amenities include refreshments, light snacks, door prizes, raffles, and silent auction. Member and vendor sales of plants and bonsai-related items. For more information contact Bonsai Sekiyu Kai at bonsaisekiyukai@gmail.com.

April 11 - 12, 2020 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 Saturday, 10:00 AM – 4:00 PM, and Sunday, 10:00 AM – 4:00 PM, with a demonstration by Dave De Groot at 1:30 PM, both days. Beginner workshop: Sunday morning from 10:00 AM -Noon. Large member sales and vendor areas, free admission and 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://www.abasbonsai.org> or contact Renee Seely, 916-929-2106 or email breadcrumb@comcast.net.

April 18 - 19, 2020 Santa Cruz, California

Santa Cruz Bonsai Kai: 31st Annual Bonsai Show at the Museum of Art & History, 705 Front Street. Show hours are from 10:00 AM – 5:00 PM with demonstrations at 11:00 AM and 2:00 PM. Saturday's demonstrators are Enrique Castano. at 11:00 AM and Gordon Deeg at 2:00 PM and Sunday's demonstrators are Enrique Castano at 11:00 AM and Scott Chadd at 2:00 PM. Demonstration trees and trees prepared by club members will be part of the raffle after each day's demonstration. Sales area will include quality vendor and member trees, pots, and other related bonsai items. Come and enjoy the Museum of Art & History, over 100 bonsai trees on display, and demonstrations on how to create bonsai from nursery stock. In addition, enjoy the Watsonville Taiko Drummers, a hang drum demonstration, and other Japanese cultural events in the recently revitalized Abbott Square next to the Museum. For this weekend only, admission price is \$5.00 for both the Museum and the Bonsai Show (Half off the normal Museum entrance fee). For more information, contact Sarah Tiller at sarah.tiller@gmail.com or Robert Potts at cbobgo@gmail.com.

April 25 - 26, 2020 San Diego, California

San Diego Bonsai Club: The 55th annual Spring Bonsai Show and Sale of the San Diego Bonsai Club will be held at in Balboa Park's Prado Building. The two-day event is open to the public from 10:00 AM to 4:00 PM. More than 50 amazing bonsai of various sizes and species will be on display. The wide range of activities will include bonsai demonstrations by expert members on both days, and a table sale featuring hundreds of trees, plants, pots and other bonsai merchandise offered by SDBC members. For more information, go to <http://www.sandiegobonsaiclub.com>.

held at the Watsonville Buddhist Temple, 423 Bridge Street. Show hours are 11:00 AM – 4:00 PM, with a demonstration by award winning Bonsai Master Katsumi Kinoshita at 1:30 PM. Over 50 outstanding bonsai, large and small, young and old, 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. A vendor will be available to sate your plant appetite for bonsai or otherwise. For more information contact Michael Anderson at (831)247-9028 or margiesmemories@aol.com.

April 26, 2020 Watsonville, California

Watsonville Bonsai Club: 47th Annual Bonsai Exhibit

Newsletter Editor: Beverly Martinez

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East Bay Bonsai Society—Schedule for 2020

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.gsbf-lakemerritt.org/

Meeting Program

- Feb 3 EBBS Board Meeting
- Feb 12 Eric Shrader – Root over Rock
- Feb 24 Workshop at Merritt College
- Mar 2 EBBS Board Meeting
- Mar 11 Gordon Deeg – Camelias
- Mar 22 Introduction to Bonsai at BGLM – Janet Nelson
- Mar 23 Workshop at Merritt College
- Apr 6 EBBS Board Meeting
- Apr 8 Darren Wong – Azaleas
- Apr 26 Introduction to Bonsai at BGLM – Tom Colby
- Apr 27 Workshop at Merritt College