



The Tree Shrinker

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A MONTHLY BULLETIN

<http://www.eastbaybonsai.org>



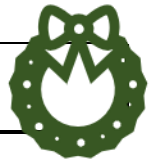
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**Happy Holidays East Bay Bonsai Society
Party December 9, 2020 7:30 PM On-Line**



December Holiday Party

This year has been very different from most years, but we can still celebrate our achievements and our wonderful trees at our annual holiday party, albeit On-Line. Our tradition is to decorate our bonsai trees and bring them for centerpieces for all to appreciate during our holiday meal.

This year we still want to decorate them, and after you do, snap a picture and send it to: EBBS_Distribution@Yahoo.com.

We will place them into a PowerPoint slide presentation that we can enjoy from the comfort of our homes while gnawing on a turkey leg or sipping a glass of your favorite holiday beverage.

Michael Hylton is also ready to walk down memory lane again this year to remind us of all the things we did and can be thankful for.

And finally, for the evenings highlight, Kathy Shaner will be on-line as our special guest to provide information and helpful facts on caring for our bonsais during winter.



This is a program you won't want to miss! Now for a little background on Kathy. Kathy's bonsai experience goes back to the early 1980's where she was a member of multiple clubs in California. She completed a 5-year internship in Japan under instructor Yasuo Mitsuya. When she completed her internship, she became a bonsai master, and was identified as the first American certified bonsai professional recognized by the professional bonsai growers branch of the Nippon Bonsai Association.

Kathy enjoys studying trees in the wilderness to gain insight for bonsai artistry. She teaches classes in bonsai and you will find her very often at the Bonsai Garden at Lake Merritt where she is Curator.

November Meeting

By: Tom Fedor

This evening's presentation on black pines by Bill Castellon (who needs no introduction, certainly) came to us live, courtesy of longtime EBBS members and luminaries Janet Nelson and Rick Trumm, who kindly lent their home studio for its venue.

We met Bill engaged in "fall work", i.e., needle thinning and branch trimming. In order to explain it he led us through an entire hypothetical year in the life, through to transplanting in late winter, early spring "just before the candles start to grow", de-candling and various stratagems (where you live, e.g., Antioch or Half Moon Bay, as well as the state of the tree, your goals for it, and of course, last year's results). The timing depends on the length of your growing season, because earlier decandling gives more growth in the remaining term before winter dormancy whereas later decandling results in less growth that year.

Details of fertilizing (i.e., N24 Romeo from early spring until decandling time and no fertilizer for a month or so

afterwards depending, again, on everything). Various needle pulling and decandling schedules and schemes, all with the design of weakening strong areas and strengthening weak areas to achieve balanced growth. And all of it works for red pines as well.

Which brings us back to autumn. He had packed for the mission, a bevy of young pine beauties (one of whom was unable to stand unassisted under the influence of too much foliage) all vying for attention. Fall work resumed in full view of the assembled faithful, as Bill demonstrated on these ladies the various principles he had only just expounded.

We really got the A to Z from BC; you should have been there. Ron Sanchez was there, with a back-budding pine no one could see and asked if the 4th of July was a good date for decandling in Antioch. Affirmative! Email a photo of you and your buds! Bill himself decandles black pines all in one go on a day in June (depending), rather than in the stages (weakest earlier, in order to strengthen, stronger later in order to weaken) that might be appropriate for very well-developed old pines.



Bill has been in training for this evening since he was a kid. He studied with Dennis Makishima and many bonsai masters in California and in Japan where he also studied landscaping. Bill's skills were recognized with two gold medals and a silver medal at the San Francisco Flower and Garden Show in 2000. A member of our Society since 1991, he served as President in '93-'94.

Congratulations!

Tom Colby's article *Water, Water Everywhere* (November 2020 Tree Shrinker) will be featured in the Winter edition of The Golden Statements magazine. You can view this online at <http://www.gsfbonsai.org/>.

Congratulations Tom! – Keep up the great articles!

Annual Garden Clean-up

Thank you to everyone who came out to help clean up the holding area at the Bonsai garden at Lake Merritt. It was a beautiful day and the work went quickly.



Adam Kleinberg and Juan Kanagui



John Nackley & Janet Nelson

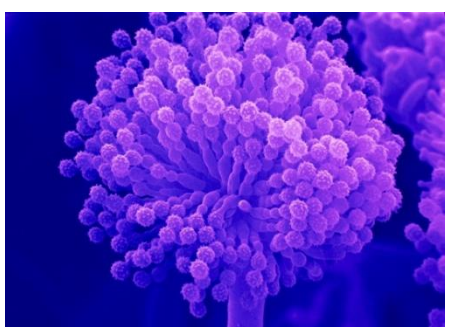


Juan Kanagui & Michael Jensen-Akula

The Fungus Among Us

By: Tom Colby

Conventional wisdom says that all living things are either plants or animals. As is frequently the case conventional wisdom falls a little short. Sitting somewhere between plants and animals are a huge number of living things and fungi fall into this category. In fact, the kingdom of fungi is so big that it has many more species than either the plant or the animal kingdom.



The role of fungi in the large order of things is to break down tissue from either plants or animals into small segments that can be used as nutrients for the next generation. They are the ultimate recyclers or are garbagemen, depending on your point of view. Unfortunately, they sometimes try to break down things that we are not ready to have broken down and this leads to problems with or bonsai.

Many different members of the vast fungus kingdom can affect our bonsai and as a result the symptoms of fungus infections can be widely diverse. The

most usual indication of a fungus infection problem is spots on the leaves of deciduous trees. This can range in severity from a spot on a single leaf to heavy spotting on all the leaves. When this occurs, it could be a prelude to loss of the plant. A related problem is powdery mildew, especially on maples.



A type of blight that attacks junipers and pines is active in the bay area. This appears to be spread by insects and will cause death of the tree if it is not treated promptly

A symptom of this blight is dieback of individual branches, starting at the tips. The dead foliage has an orangey brown color. The various organisms that cause root rot in bonsai are not technically fungi, but they miss the cut by a subtle difference that is only of



Ron Sanchez



Suzanne Muller, Jeff Behring & Rick Trumm

We even had a little time to wish Bob Gould and Kathy Shaner Happy Birthday!



Tom Fedor, Bob Gould, Kathy Shaner & Janet Nelson Trumm
Bob and Kathy "Blowing" out candles with chop sticks.

interest to microbiologists who are interested in taxonomy. For our purposes they can be lumped with fungi.

Treatment of fungi differs from treatment of insect problems in at least three ways. The fungi are inside the tree whereas insects are for the most part outside the tree where they can be contacted by an insecticide. Because the fungi are living inside the tree, they are hard to reach with fungicides because the fungicides must penetrate the tree to be effective.

The biology of insects is pretty much the same for all species, so any insecticide will usually have at least some effect on any bug, ranging from effective control to at least making them angry. Fungi are a large family of beasties and each member of the family has a very different biology and as a result any single fungicide may offer good control of your problem or may have no effect at all.

The third difference is that insects crawl or fly from branch to branch. Simple contact of a branch with bugs with an uninfected branch usually does not lead to an immediate spreading of the problem because the bugs must physically move from one branch to the other. In contrast, fungi are spread by spores and contact of a diseased leaf with a fresh leaf is all it takes to spread the problem to the new leaf.

The most effective way to control fungal problems is to practice good hygiene.

Promptly remove fallen leaves from your trees.

The blight infecting conifers is particularly contagious. A great



way to spread the fungus throughout the tree is to clip off contaminated dead branches and then to trim uninfected branches. The clippers will spread the fungus. If you are working on an infected tree, frequently disinfect your clippers by dipping them in alcohol or a weak peroxide solution. Powdery mildew can be caused by watering late in the day, allowing the foliage to remain wet overnight. Maples and oaks are particularly susceptible to powdery mildew.

In the case of insecticides, you have a choice of a very wide range of products starting with simply blasting them off your tree with a hose to chemicals that are very safe to harsh chemicals that must be handled with respect. In the case of fungal problems, the available choices are pretty much limited to harsh chemicals. Horticulture copper sprays work and are probably the least toxic of the available products. Cleary 3336, available from Amazon, is usually more effective than the copper formulation and also more toxic. It is reputed to be systemic which means that it is absorbed by the tree and can potentially deal with the fungus inside the tree.

If you are only interested in nontoxic and environmentally gentle means of controlling fungus infections, the world of organic gardening offers a possible solution. The procedure has not been applied to bonsai but if you are an experimentalist at heart it might help to reduce fungal problems in general and leaf spotting in particular.



The idea here is that on each living plant there is a balance between good and bad microbes. If you have a leaf spotting, it is caused by an imbalance of the microbes. You can restore the balance by adding good microbes to the tree. You do this by soaking compost in water which allegedly creates a lot of good microbes.

The water is decanted and sprayed on the foliage. This procedure has been used at the University of California Botanical Garden with reduced leaf spotting and better apparent health of the trees. With no control group of unsprayed trees, it is not clear whether the apparent good results arose from the spray or something else.



Literature from England in the nineteenth century indicates that green house plants were regularly manured. This is a fertilization scheme which involves soaking manure in water, decanting the water and using it to fertilize plants in the green house. According to our organic gardening friends, this procedure would generate a lot of good microbes and would maintain a balance of microbes in the plant. Presumably, you could both fertilize your tree and maintain proper microbe balance by drenching your plants with a manure water concoction. If you do this and have good results let us know and, by the way, do not forget to compare your results with trees which are only fed with your current fertilizer.

For Sale by Club members

“Have recently downsized my collection and some of the trees have been on consignment at Bonsai Tonight in Alameda. The following are available - the crabapple, the trident forest, the large trident, the liquidambar forest, and the willow-leaf Ficus and can be viewed at: <https://bonsaitonight.com/client-sales-trees/>

Please feel free to contact me for any questions on the details of the trees.”

Tony Saraceno 925-989-3612
asaraceno2011@gmail.com

Looking to sell bonsai or give away?

Events by Others

Each membership household, free of charge, may place a five-line ad related to bonsai in two newsletters each year. Please submit your ad by the preceding Monday of the month to appear in the next publication. Send your ad to EBBS_Distribution@yahoo.com.

Newsletter Editor: Beverly Martinez
Contributors: Tom Fedor & Tom Colby
Newsletter Photographers: various members

East Bay Bonsai Society—Schedule for 2020/2021

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/

<u>Meeting</u>	<u>Program</u>
Dec 7	EBBS Board Meeting
Dec 9	Holiday Party
Jan 4	EBBS Board Meeting
Jan 13	Andrew Robson – Winter Silhouettes