



The Tree Shrinker

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A MONTHLY BULLETIN

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East Bay Bonsai Society **Monthly Meeting: Wednesday, June 9th at 7:30 PM On-Line**

June Meeting

Summer is almost here and bonsai growing is at it's best. Our presenter for June is very versed in what to do in summers to get the best out of your bonsais. You may recall Sergio Cuan as our special guest presenter at the 2019 show. Sergio worked on two trees showing his skills and diversity.

We are pleased to have Sergio back, live from New York, to present on summer maintenance. He will cover topics such as leaf pruning, thread grafting, root grafting, etc.



Sergio Cuan is a visual artist who graduated with a BFA in Art and Design from Pratt Institute in Brooklyn, NY. Professionally, he works as a creative director for a major entertainment company in New York City. A highly versatile visual artist and designer, he works on a diverse range of location-based experiences across the globe which include hotels and resorts, live events and themed parks.

Sergio has a passion for art and horticulture alike. Early on he realized that bonsai was the ideal synthesis of both. As a result, he became fascinated with bonsai as art forms. Sergio, also known as MACH5 by some in the bonsai community, is a largely self-taught bonsai artist. However, he has taken workshops with prominent bonsai masters Bill Valavanis, Mauro Stemberger and Bjorn Bjorholm which he continues to take from time to time to further his bonsai studies and skills.

Although Sergio works on a variety of species such as Engelmann spruce, Rocky Mountain juniper and Eastern white cedar, he has developed a particular interest and passion for a wide range of deciduous species such as maples, elm and beech among many others. In 2014 he built a bonsai garden in Northern New Jersey in a beautiful setting surrounded by rolling hills, lakes and deciduous woodlands. The intimate yet spacious garden features many species of trees in which he recently started to conduct private workshops.

Sergio believes that bonsai is a true, universal art form that holds commonalities with painting, drawing and sculpture. But unlike those art forms, bonsai is alive. Practicing bonsai is an intimate and continued dialogue between artist and nature. The give and take, the cause and effect. There is an interactive component that gives bonsai its own unique fourth dimension.

Sergio's work has appeared in International Bonsai magazine, Bonsai Focus magazine and Bonsai Bark blog. His work has been shown at numerous exhibitions and has received several awards including "Finest Deciduous Award" at the 4th US National Bonsai Exhibition in Rochester, NY and "Best in Show" at the 2016 Winter Silhouette Expo in Kannapolis, NC. He travels often across the US to conduct workshops, lectures, critiques and demonstrations.

May Meeting

By: Tom Fedor

We were joined this evening by Eric Schrader, past president of the Bonsai Society of San Francisco (BSSF), who presented at our last live meeting about Root over Rock (ROR) style bonsai. Eric is a grower, writer, photographer, and bonsai artist in San Francisco's Bernal Heights neighborhood. Tonight's topic, sequoia sempervirens, is a tree known to most of us, appreciated by many of our club members both as potted bonsai as well as full-life sized local scenery. We were treated to a view of Eric's work on redwoods composed of narrated videos interspersed with live discussion and commentary on the videos (almost like a short hall of mirrors, I thought).

The first video featured the birth of an exposed root redwood bonsai grown from seed. Eric commented that most of our redwood bonsai, naturally, is locally collected material; he is unaware of any examples grown from cuttings that were brought up as proper bonsai. Sounds like a young person's project to me, and hats off to Eric!



Eric used a waterlily type basket to plant the little redwood. By removing the bottom of the pot and placing the tree in the top of the basket he was able to tie the original pot down with wires to hold its position. Then he could trim and wire the plant in its new home.



After wiring the tree, it is ready to grow and send new roots into the much larger pot.



The next topic he spent a great deal of time on and rightly so, as understanding it proved to be the key to the redwood bonsai lock for Eric. It's all about proper and appropriate pinching. Just as for Japanese maples, pinching and pruning is the road to redwood ramification. Several attendees puzzled by the behavior of their own redwoods had their queries addressed in depth with a pinching demonstration, and were helpfully informed of exactly what to expect when undertaken correctly (and incorrectly). Eric promised to provide an update of a particular tree six months from now to give us a view to the effects of tonight's intervention. We won't forget to remind him.



This is the tree at the beginning of the process.



Apex after wiring and bending it down to show age.



Final tree after styling

Let's see your trees!

At the May meeting a few of us were able to get some quality bonsai advice on our redwood trees by sending in a picture and questions for Eric. As getting advice from bonsai experts has been very difficult to do this last year, we were able to take full advantage of this opportunity. Now, you can too!

Sergio Cuan has agreed to critique members trees from pictures at the end of his presentation. Just take a snapshot of your tree, and send it to Addison at barcalod@gmail.com. Submissions must be sent no later than June 5th to be available for the June 9th meeting. So, let's see your trees and have a fun interaction with Sergio!

Looking for a plant sale location

The board has been actively trying to find a convenient place to have a plant sale in July since the Lake Merritt Garden Center is currently not open for access. If you know of a place that would provide security for plants and be convenient to members, please let us know. You can send an email to EBBS_Distribution@yahoo.com or contact any of your board members with comments or suggestions.

Stewartia

By: Tom Colby



If one were to hold a bonsai popularity contest, junipers would head the list and for good reason. They are readily available, gladly suffer all sorts of horticultural indignities and with a modest amount of imagination can quickly become really cool bonsai. Close behind the junipers is the trident maple for similar reasons. Somewhat behind these two are a host of the usual suspects such as pine, quince elms etc. Lurking in the far background are a few trees that are only rarely seen as bonsai and have wonderful qualities that are overlooked. Among these trees is the Japanese Stewartia.

Stewartias are close relatives to the Camellias. There are several species of Stewartia, two of which are native to the United States. The first Stewartia species to be

described was discovered by the early plant explorers in the United States back in colonial days. It was only later that other species were discovered in Asia. Plants sold as Japanese Stewartia in the horticulture trade are actually either of two species, *S. monadelphica* and *S. pseudocamellia* which are mainly slightly different in matters of interest to only a botanist. The true *S. monadelphica* has somewhat smaller leaves which makes it the slightly more attractive of the two as bonsai material.

What makes the Stewartias of interest to the bonsai artist is that they are camellias in technicolor. Camellias are evergreen but in contrast, Stewartias are deciduous and in the fall the leaves turn a gorgeous red color before dropping. But wait, there is more. Camellias have boring gray bark. Stewartias have a reddish bark which flakes off. The bright peeling bark is somewhat similar to the more familiar Sycamore tree but more colorful. The tree bears white flowers in July which closely resemble Camellia flowers. It is reported that sometimes the flowers are fragrant.

The culture of these trees is very much like that of azaleas. They need a constantly moist somewhat acid soil and quickly show their displeasure when allowed to dry out. A cool root zone is a requirement so growing them in the hotter part of our area may take some care, particularly shading them during the hottest part of the day. Stewartias are naturally small trees and like to act like a small tree by sending out long branches.

To retain shape as a bonsai the branches can be treated in the same way as elm branches, that is, let the branch grow out to 5 or six sets of leaves and then cutting back to two leaves. Flowers are produced on new wood but not on the tips of the branches, so it is possible to maintain bonsai shape without sacrificing flowers. Cutting back the branches causes a lot of branch buds to grow and leads to the fine branch structure which we want for a fine bonsai but can cause the inner branches to be so shaded that they die out. Fortunately,

Stewartias are quite amenable to defoliation by cutting the leaf in half. This allows light to penetrate into the center of the tree. The natural leaves of the tree can vary in size from an inch and a half to as big as four inches and defoliation also reduces the size to a more manageable scale for the tree.

Stewartia seeds are readily available. We usually do not bother with sewing seed for our bonsai material but in this case, Stewartia seedlings can make a terrific group planting and growing seeds is a way of producing material for a group planting. The seed can be a bit of a challenge to germinate but soaking them in water for a few days before sowing them helps. Stewartias are trees with year around appeal with fall colors, summer flowers and beautiful bark. They are truly a tree for all seasons. They should be seen a lot more often as bonsai. If you see one at a sale, do not pass it by.

Make your tree a Social Media Star! Our Facebook page is in need of member's trees to display. If interested in showing your tree, send a picture to EBBS_Distribution@Yahoo.com.

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.

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East Bay Bonsai Society—Schedule for 2021

Regular Meetings: Second Wednesday, in person every month (except July, August and October) @ 7:30 pm. Meetings are currently taking place on-line through Google Meetup every month on the 2nd Wednesday at 7:30 pm. When in person: Place: Lakeside Garden Center, 666 Bellevue Avenue, Oakland. Visitors welcome.

<u>Meeting</u>	<u>Program</u>
June 7	EBBS Board Meeting
June 9	Monthly meeting – Sergio Cuan – Summer work
June 28	EBBS Board Meeting
July 14	Monthly meeting – TBA
Aug 2	EBBS Board Meeting
Aug 11	Monthly meeting – TBA

Bonsai Calendar

- Watering – Water regularly. Don't over-water de-foliated trees.
- Fertilizing – Continue regular feeding.
- Repotting – Not recommended at this time except for tropical and semi-tropical trees.
- Styling/Pruning – Rotate trees. Watch for wire cutting during this period of fast growth. OK to defoliate healthy trees in first part of month. Candle prune black and other hard pines.
- Cuttings – Root softwood cuttings on deciduous trees and Satsuki.
- Insect and disease control – Maintain defensive treatments for fungus. Watch for and treat insect infestations.

Refer to the EBBS Bonsai Seasonal guide for more information on care

Have an idea for an on-line meeting? You can contact any board member or send a note to EBBS_Distribution@Yahoo.com. All suggestions are welcome!