



# THE TREE SHRINKER

East Bay Bonsai Society

Next meeting (in-person and online): **March 8, 2023 at 7:30pm**

## 2023 EBBS Schedule

- Mar 8** - Addison Galambos/Alise Offeman - Kokufu Trip (In Person & Online)
- Mar 19** - Members-Only Workshop at the Bonsai Garden (12 - 3pm)
- Mar 26** - Introduction to Bonsai - Janet Nelson (In Person)
- Apr 12** - Monthly program (TBD)
- Apr 23** - Introduction to Bonsai - Michael Jensen-Akula (In Person)
- May 10** - Rick Trumm (Topic TBD - In Person & Online)
- May 28** - Introduction to Bonsai - Janet Nelson (In Person)
- Jun 14 - EBBS Annual Auction**
- Jun 25** - Introduction to Bonsai - Tom Colby (In Person)
- Jul 12** - Julian Tsai, Japanese Deciduous Development (In Person & Online)
- Aug 9** - Tom Colby - Bonsai Stands (In Person & Online)
- Aug (TBD)** - Summer BBQ
- Sept 13** - Lucy Judd - Accent Plants (In Person & Online)
- Oct 14 & 15 - Annual Club Show**
- Nov 8** - Bob Shimon - Pygmy Cypress (In Person & Online)
- Dec 13** - Holiday Party

## President's Message



It's March, and spring is at hand. The deciduous trees are starting to leaf out and summer feels right around the corner. This month is exciting with our own Addison and Alise sharing their adventures at the 10th Kokufu in Japan. They promised to take plenty of pictures and maybe, even have a souvenir to raffle off at the meeting.

Later on in the month we will hold our first Third Sunday Members Only Workshop at the workshop area in the Bonsai Garden (12:00 - 3:00). I'll be there, I hope to see you too. Then on the 4th Sunday of March, for those who are just getting started, Janet Nelson will hold the Introduction to Bonsai (formerly Bonsai for beginners) series at the same location and time.

Your board is working on establishing a field trip to members gardens and will be soliciting gardens to participate. So be ready to participate, either by attending or hosting soon.

Reminder! March 31st is the last day to get your dues in for 2023. After that, no more newsletter or participation in member only activities. We've got a lot of fun times ahead, so get those dues in!

Until our next meeting, Sayonara!

Bev Martinez

### Regular Meetings

2nd Wednesday, every month (except June & Oct.) @ 7:30pm  
Lakeside Garden Center  
666 Bellevue Avenue, Oakland

Guests are welcome!

## Last chance to pay dues!

If you haven't yet paid your annual dues, the deadline is March 31. They allow our club to put on the great events that feed our love of bonsai!

### Please make checks out to EBBS.

Please indicate your name and whether the dues are for single membership or family. If you prefer to pay by credit card, you can use this [link to the EBBS Membership Request form](#), or you can pay at any meeting via Square. A 3-4% processing fee will be added to the cost to offset fees from Square.

You can also mail your dues to:

**East Bay Bonsai Society**  
c/o P. Cahill  
4933 Cochrane Ave  
Oakland, CA. 94618

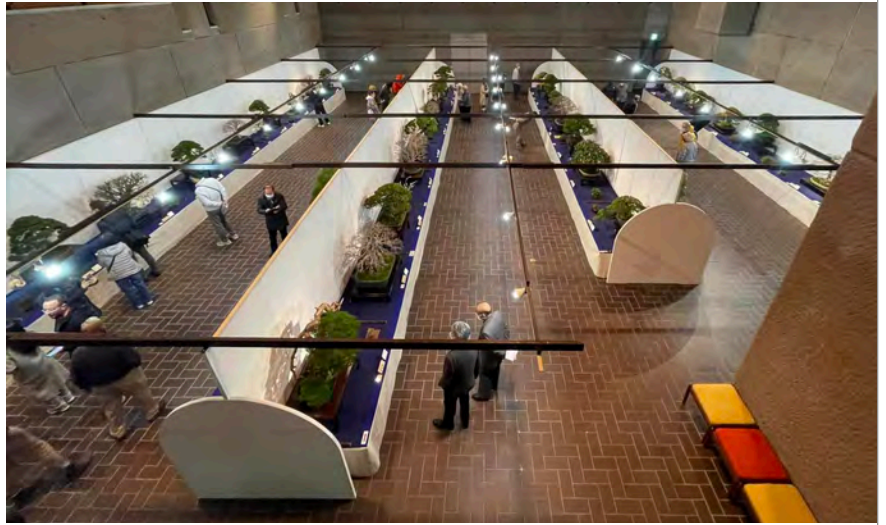
Annual dues have not changed:

Single membership - \$30  
Family membership - \$40  
Single/newsletter via USPS - \$40  
Family/newsletter via USPS - \$50

If you became a member after October 1, 2022, then you are paid up for 2023.

## Member Ads

Each membership household, may place a free 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 to [EBBS\\_Distribution@yahoo.com](mailto:EBBS_Distribution@yahoo.com).



## March meeting: Kokufu!

We have a really exciting presentation coming up on March 8. Club members Addison Galambos and Alise Offeman both took a trip to Japan to see the 97th Kokufu Bonsai Exhibition at the Tokyo Metropolitan Art Museum and will be regaling us with tales (and pictures) of their adventures!

Kokufu-Ten is the most important exhibition in, well I guess the entire world, where over 200 of the highest quality Bonsai trees of Japan are displayed.



**Refreshments will be provided by: Alise Offeman, Brian Conway and Tom Fedor.**

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### Newsletter Contributors

Want to tell us about your bonsai adventures? Want to share your expertise with your friends in the club? Have an opinion you want to express about Bonsai? You can! Email Adam, our newsletter editor, at [adam@tractionco.com](mailto:adam@tractionco.com) to submit content!

# How to plan a trip to Kokufu

By Addison Galambos

*I just got back from an amazing trip to Japan for Kokufu, one of the top Bonsai Exhibitions in the world. As a foreigner, it was actually fairly difficult for me to figure out basic things like "Where exactly is it located?", and "What dates is it?", etc. so I wanted to share my learnings with the group.*



## 1. Where is it and when is it?

The 97th annual show which I attended was held at the Tokyo Metropolitan Art Museum in the Ueno area of Tokyo, Japan. The Green Club (Vendor Sales Area) and headquarters of the Nippon Bonsai Association is located about a 15 minute walk from the art museum.

The date is not a set in stone series of days each year, so you need to check the location and time when they are announced. I believe it is almost always a set of two parts with an intermission of a few days in between for them to switch out all the displays. I kept checking the below website (used Google Chrome to translate to English) and it was announced in the October timeframe. I then booked my flights and hotels after the announcement!

<https://bonsai-kyokai.or.jp/>

Here was the address I typed in Google Maps to find the Green Club (vendor sales area). I believe this is a static location for each show: 3-42 Uenokoen, Taito City, Tokyo 110-0007, Japan

## 2. How should I get there and where should I stay?

For International visitors, flying into Narita airport in Tokyo is the cheapest and most convenient option. The public transportation in Japan is amazing and well marked in English in the big cities. Google Maps is also your best friend as the information is extremely accurate and it also guides you to the exact entrances and exits to take as well as the best car to board for transfers. There are a glut of options for getting most places which can be the most confusing part. You'll most likely take a train directly from the Narita airport to Tokyo Station in Tokyo (~30 minutes with the express) and then a local train from Tokyo Station to the area you are staying in.

I chose to stay in Ueno and had just a 10 minute walk to the exhibit and Green Club. I stayed at a hotel called Hotel Graphy Nezu that was super



affordable, had small but comfortable rooms, and a great breakfast and staff. It was in a more neighborhood feeling location northwest of Ueno Station that was still walking distance from the train station and the event. That being said, the event is usually very close to Ueno Station, so you can stay anywhere in Tokyo you'd like based on what feel you want. Other districts can offer larger rooms or better nightlife, etc. I just used booking.com to reserve all my hotels and it was super easy.

### 3. How do I get a ticket for the event?!

Right before you walk into the event hall, you can buy tickets at the front door. You don't have to buy tickets in advance. That being said, if you know



anyone in the bonsai community there, they hand out free tickets like candy. The Green Club opened the day before the show and so I met some folks there who gave me a free ticket. A ticket was 1000 yen at the door and included part 1 and part 2. I was also able to just show my used ticket to gain re entry because I went to multiple days of each show with no extra cost. I just asked with Google translate at the front desk and they waved me in. There are many exhibits in the Museum, but it was self explanatory to get to the Bonsai part.

### 4. Shopping!

I would be remiss if I didn't include everything I learned about the shopping experience. The Green Club is the vendor sales area associated with the exhibition. I'm from the US so I was almost exclusively looking at non living items (no trees) because there is a very difficult quarantine process so I can't comment on tree prices. That being said, the first day (opened before the day show started) and the last day were the best days to buy items at the Green Club and there were still some deals to be had. In general, prices at the Green Club were marked up very high compared to other places in Japan. The first day had few deals but many desirable times, the last day had the best haggling :). Another plus for the Green Club is that it had the highest density of high quality items I found throughout the trip. If you're looking to buy some of the more in demand, modern items like a Gyozan pot, this is a great place to browse. I bought a few must have items for myself on the first day and was usually able to negotiate around a 10% discount by just asking politely. I didn't try to push too hard and was just a single person buying items. The last day of the show was the exact opposite. Vendors were willing to give massive discounts for some items on the final day of the sale. I was able to get 40-50% discounts on some items off of the original price with a little more forceful bargaining.

I visited Shunka-en in Tokyo, Kouka-en in Osaka and also went to a more commercial bonsai garden center near Osaka that had the best shopping of the trip. I also heard from others that shopping at S-Cube outside of Tokyo had great prices. The Green Club also had excellent deals on open box tools and some very unique jita and slabs which I purchased. I found the pot quality was interesting, most vendors brought the top price

items like \$750-\$2000 pots (Gyozan, Syuzan, Antique Chinese) or there were a small number selling more production quality pots. Most purchases were in cash and they are also more likely to take a discount with cash. The best way to get cash with the lowest fee is to use a bank that waives ATM fees internationally and then just go to a 7-eleven or drug store to make withdrawals.

**Want more tips? There's an extended version of this post on our blog. Check it out [here](#).**

## February Meeting Recap

by Michael Jensen-Akula

For our February Club presentation, local bonsai artist Eric Schrader discussed Mame Bonsai. Eric has taken a special interest in mame, and he has been developing them for almost ten years now. Mame (pronounced Ma-may) is the Japanese term for 'bean' or mini bonsai.

Mame definitions vary, but usually refer to trees between 2-6 inches in size—even smaller than our Shohin bonsai.



Eric noted that it is not easy to find suitable material for mame. Most nursery plants have an overlong straight section at the base and even a two inch straight section at the base is proportionally much too big if your tree is only 4 inches tall. He wired up his (about 7,000!) junipers from cuttings, often attempting to get a very proximal bend at the base of the trunk. After a year or so, he grows them out in 2", 3", and 4" plastic pots.

For junipers, he adds shari to the trunk early on. One method is to remove a straight strip of bark and cambium along one side of the small trunk. He then bends and twists the still small and flexible trunk to make the shari and lifeline swirl around in a pleasing manner.

His favorite plants for mame right now are juniper (tighter leaf varieties such as itoigawa or kishu), cotoneaster microphyllus, seiju cork bark elm, and black pine. Japanese maples can work, but those with very tight internodes are most adaptable. He has had difficulty with the larger internodes of zelkova, and cotoneaster, being in the rose family, has led to problems with scale, so watch for it. Anything is possible,

but it appears best to select a plant with small leaves, close internodes, the ability to bud back on hard cuts, and tolerate some aggressive root pruning. Chojubai or Sekka anyone?

Aftercare is important, as the small root mass and tiny container make these little guys very susceptible to heat and drying out. Eric uses a Shohin akadama/pumice/lava blend, small particles (1/8-1/16) about the size of coarse sand) still sifting out the dust. He then places them in a large tray on top of a layer of lava or sand. He allows the roots to grow out of the pot and into the medium at the base of the pot.

The tiny pot achieves the aesthetic goal and the larger pot underneath provides horticultural backup, lessening the need for more onerous maintenance. Nonetheless, they may need watering 2-3 times per day on the hottest days.

He does need to cut off the escape roots periodically to prevent the plant from relying too much on those roots and to prevent them from occasionally filling up and blocking drainage

Mame require repotting every 1-2 years. It is a quick process... 'snip snip snip and put it back in'. Avoid excess fertilizer which is not helpful in this low volume setting.

As to styling, with trees this small, he takes a minimalist approach. He generally deals with only one or two foliage masses and seemed to say that if you can cut back further, do it! He has had mame in tiny pots for ten years now, but the long term goals with mame are a bit different. You will gradually develop a bigger base with some taper, but given the need to do hard cutbacks on a regular basis, there is a component of impermanence—a need to re-invent the tree on a regular basis—even more so than with our larger trees.

However, you should still aspire to general bonsai principles and proportion. Over his years working on mame, he appears to have developed a real comfort with fearlessly reducing the canopy and root system. Some of his repots look almost like restarting a new cutting.



He and his wife Dory have a great selection of starter plants and mame pots at reasonable prices on his website [www.bonsaify.com](http://www.bonsaify.com). Despite the small size, many of the pots come with holes for both drainage and wires.

Please also look at his [YouTube bonsaify videos](#), where you will see great tips and close-ups of mame work. The camera work on these little guys is excellent. A particularly helpful episode on placing mame in a grow tray can be seen [at this link](#).

## Mammoth thanks!

We'd like to extend a huge—perhaps mammoth—thank you to all of the club members who dedicated their time volunteering for the GSBF Mammoth Auction & Sale to benefit the Garden this month. The show was a huge success and made a major impact for the Bonsai Garden at Lake Merritt!







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[www.eastbaybonsai.org](http://www.eastbaybonsai.org)

## Let's talk about moss.

by Adam Kleinberg

There was an interesting thread on the EBBS Members Facebook Group, which is slowly but steadily growing (14 of you have joined so far!).

Jeff Ammons asked, "Has anyone had any luck getting moss to grow on your trees in the East Bay? I harvested some during all the rains we've gotten, but it's already starting to look pretty dried up, but I don't want to overwater my trees just to keep the moss happy."

Beverly made a great suggestion, "Have you tried misting the moss rather than watering? You might need to do it several times a day and especially in the evening so it can hold water."

Which got me thinking. As a relative bonsai newbie with only a few years under my belt, I've always wondered how people got that beautiful, rich, green moss on their trees. It's a great mossy mystery. So, I decided to do some research on moss (both on the internet and in Tree Shrinker archives)

Moss on bonsai trees can be both aesthetically pleasing and beneficial for the overall health of the tree. The connection between moss and bonsai trees is a symbiotic relationship in which the moss provides several benefits to the bonsai.

People put moss on bonsai trees for several reasons, including its aesthetic appeal and its benefits to the health of the tree. The addition of moss can create a more natural look and feel to a

bonsai display, making it look like a miniature forest. Additionally, moss can also help regulate moisture levels, which can reduce the need for frequent watering and make the care of the bonsai easier.

Moss can help retain moisture around the roots of the bonsai by acting as a natural sponge, preventing the soil from drying out too quickly. This is especially important for bonsai trees that are grown in shallow pots, as they are more prone to drying out quickly. Additionally, moss can also act as a protective layer against extreme temperatures and sunlight, providing insulation and reducing evaporation.

There are several types of moss that work well on bonsai trees, including sheet moss, cushion moss, and sphagnum moss. You can find these pretty easily at a Garden Center or online. You can also just collect it from your lawn or the forest. I plan to go up on my roof and gather some this Spring.

Sheet moss is the most commonly used moss on bonsai trees due to its flat, low-growing nature, which makes it easy to apply to the surface of the soil. Cushion moss, on the other hand, has a taller, more cushion-like appearance, which can add texture and depth to a bonsai display. Sphagnum moss is a more water-retentive moss that can be used in conjunction with other types of moss to help maintain moisture levels around the bonsai roots.

To take care of moss on bonsai trees, it is important to monitor the moisture levels and avoid overwatering or allowing the moss to dry out completely. If the moss does become too dry, it can be misted with water to help revive it (as Bev noted on Facebook!). Additionally, moss can be trimmed or removed as needed to prevent it from overgrowing and potentially harming the bonsai. One great tip I found online is to add a smaller sized akadama between the seams in your moss to help maintain moisture!

Moss should be removed from your bark, however. It'll eventually eat your bark if you let it. Vinegar works to kill moss—I can attest to this as

Rick Trumm suggested this for my pygmy cypress and it worked great. Just be careful not to overdo it!

Certain types of bonsai trees work better with moss than others, particularly those that are native to forested areas or have a more natural, rustic appearance. Trees such as Japanese maple, pine, and juniper are often paired with moss in bonsai displays to create a more authentic forest look. However, it ultimately comes down to personal preference and the desired aesthetic of the display.

I can't wait to experiment with moss on my trees in the coming months!

## Lone Pine Field Trip



We also had our first club field trip to Lone Pine Gardens in Sebastapol this month! Over twenty club members made the trek to the nursery to find bonsai and accent plants for their collections. Addison taught a class for beginners that will be the first in a series over the course of a year to convert nursery stock into bonsai. It was great to see a bunch of new people join us for the event (and some familiar faces as well, of course). Thank you, Addison, for coming up with this awesome idea!



## Events by Others

**American Bonsai Association, Sacramento** Apr 8 - Apr 9, 10am - 4pm

Sacramento, 3330 McKinley Blvd, Sacramento, CA 95816, USA

The American Bonsai Association, Sacramento's (ABAS) 63rd Annual Spring Bonsai & Suiseki Show and Sale will feature headliner Todd Schlafer of First Branch Bonsai. Demonstrations will take place both Saturday and Sunday at 1:30 PM.

**Modesto Bonsai Club Show** April 15, 10am - 4pm

Stanislaus Agricultural Harvest Hall, 3800 Cornucopia Way, Modesto, CA 95358, USA

Join us for our 40th annual Bonsai and Suiseki show. We will have sales of trees, pots, tools, and other bonsai related items throughout the day. A demonstration will be presented by Sam Adina at 1:30 pm

**Kusamura Bonsai Club** April 29, 12pm - 4pm, Apr 30, 11am - 4pm

Addison School, 650 Addison Street (Entrance at 1045 Webster), Palo Alto, CA, Demonstrations both days at 1:30pm – Michael Greenstein on Saturday. More at [www.kusamurabonsai.org](http://www.kusamurabonsai.org)

**San Diego Bonsai Club Show** April 29, 12 - 5pm

Balboa Park, Casa Del Prado, San Diego, CA, USA. For more information contact Ignacio De La Torre at [igdlt@att.net](mailto:igdlt@att.net)

**Santa Cruz Bonsai Kai** May 13, 10:00 AM - 4:00 PM

Aptos, 2555 Mar Vista Dr, Aptos, CA 95003. Join us for the Show & Sale but stay for the Demonstration at 1pm.

[www.santacruzbonsaikai.co](http://www.santacruzbonsaikai.co)

**Sei Boku Bonsai Kai Show.** June 3-4, 10:00 AM - 4:00 PM

San Mateo Garden Center, 605 Parkside Way, San Mateo (at Beresford Park). Come celebrate Sei Boku Bonsai Kai's 38th anniversary. David De Root demo and open viewing workshop at 1pm each day. More at [www.seibokubonsaikai.org](http://www.seibokubonsaikai.org).

**East Bay Bonsai Society Annual Auction** Jun 14, 7:00 PM - 9:00 PM Oakland, Lakeside Park Garden Center, 666

Bellevue Ave, Oakland, CA 94610. The East Bay Bonsai Society's in-person bonsai auction on will start at 7:30pm with a preview at 7:00pm. More? [mhylton@rocketmail.com](mailto:mhylton@rocketmail.com).

**REBS 37th Annual Bonsai Show** Aug 26 - Aug 27, 2023, 10am - 4pm

Rohnert Park, 5401 Snyder Ln, Rohnert Park, CA 94928, USA

The return of the Redwood Empire Bonsai Society hosting its 37th Annual Bonsai Show. Featuring the international renowned bonsai artist Ryan Neil as guest demonstrator.

**Yamato Bonsai Kai Show** Oct 14, 11 AM - Oct 15, 5 PM

Union City, 32975 Alvarado-Niles Rd, Union City, CA 94587, USA. Demonstration trees will be raffled off as grand prize

each day. For more info and updates find us on Facebook by searching "Yamato Bonsai Kai" or [irishfishboy@yahoo.com](mailto:irishfishboy@yahoo.com).

**GSBF Rendezvous** Oct 20 - Oct 22, 2023, 10am - 4pm

Santa Nella, 13070 CA-33, Santa Nella, CA 95322, USA

Bonsai Sales • Auction • Workshops • Lectures • Community

**Capital City Bonsai Show** Oct 21 - Oct 22, 10am - 3pm

Sacramento, 3330 McKinley Blvd, Sacramento, CA 95816, USA

This group show features tree and suiseki displays from participating area clubs

Get events invitations and updates at <https://www.gsbfbonsai.org/events>.