



# THE TREE SHRINKER

**East Bay Bonsai Society Next Meeting: Jan. 10, 2024 at 7:30pm**

## Dues are Due!

With every new year comes our campaign to collect dues for the next year. If you became a member after October 1, 2023, then you are paid up for 2024. If not, you can pay your dues in a variety of ways. We will have a box at the next meeting where you can drop off either cash or check in a provided envelope. Please indicate your name and whether the dues are for single membership or family.

### Please make checks out to EBBS.

If you prefer to pay by credit card, you can use the link in the [eastbaybonsai.org/membership](http://eastbaybonsai.org/membership) website to pay, or you can pay at any meeting via Square (ask any board member who to contact). 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

## President's Message: It's Time to Repot!



Happy New Year and welcome back to our 63rd year as a society. What a fabulous year we had in 2023! My head is still swimming with all of the events and programs.

Many thanks to all who participated and made it a great year! We ended the year with 136 members, I believe that is an all-time high and we are looking to add to that number this year.

And there is more to come!

January will start us off with repotting at our monthly meeting, and I hope all will participate. Our newer beginners learn from watching and doing, and there are no better instructors than our experienced bonsai artists to do the teaching.

We will have soil to sell by the pound and wire available for tying down roots. **So, bring a pot and tree, and plan to teach or practice on January 10th.**

We have a full lineup of our favorite bonsai artists after January, and we're excited to introduce something new: we'll be incorporating a Tokonoma review each month as well. Check out the Tokonoma article with a signup link.

Finally, mentoring is on our minds; and it will be a main goal this year to establish a mentoring program that will pair up members who can learn and have fun with other members.

Keep an eye out for your monthly Tree Shrinker to keep you abreast of upcoming workshops and events.

See you soon,

Bev

## 2023/2024 EBBS Schedule

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### Regular Meetings

2nd Wednesday, every month  
(except June & Oct.) @ 7:30pm

**Jan 10** - *Repotting Party* at the Garden Center. 7:30pm, Small bags of bonsai soil available for sale.

**Jan 28** - *Intro to Bonsai at the Garden* with Michael Jensen-Akula\*

**Feb 14** - Peter Tea, 7:30pm

**Mar 13** - Eric Shrader, 7:30pm

**Mar 24** - *Intro to Bonsai at the Garden* with Janet Nelson\*

**Apr 10** - Andrew Robson, 7:30pm

**Apr 28** - *Intro to Bonsai at the Garden* with Tom Colby\*

**May 8** - Jonas Dupuich, 7:30pm

**May 26** - *Intro to Bonsai at the Garden* with Addison Galambos\*

**June** - 2024 EBBS Annual Auction

**Jun 23** - *Intro to Bonsai at the Garden* with Michael Jensen-Akula\*

**Jul 28** - *Intro to Bonsai at the Garden* with Janet Nelson\*

**Aug 25** - *Intro to Bonsai at the Garden* with Tom Colby\*

**Sep 22** - *Intro to Bonsai at the Garden* with Addison Galambos\*

**Oct 27** - *Intro to Bonsai at the Garden* with Michael Jensen-Akula\*

**Nov 24** - *Intro to Bonsai at the Garden* with Janet Nelson\*

\*at the Bonsai Garden workshop



*Lisa Harper's Cotoneaster Tokonoma from our holiday party*

## Tokonoma Displays!

As you may recall, we tried to describe what a Tokonoma is at our holiday party. I was still a little confused, so I looked it up. According to Encyclopedia Britannica:

*"Tokonoma, alcove in a Japanese room, used for the display of paintings, pottery, flower arrangements, and other forms of art. Household accessories are removed when not in use so that the tokonoma found in almost every Japanese house, is the focal point of the interior. A feature of the [shoin](#) architectural style, which originated in the [Kamakura period](#) (1192-1333), the tokonoma developed from the private altar ([butsudan](#)) in Zen Buddhist priests' homes. The butsudana consisted of an alcove containing a narrow wooden table with an incense burner, votive candles, and flower vessels placed before a Buddhist scroll hung on the wall. In its adaptation to the Japanese house, it was used exclusively for the display of art objects."*

In our shows, we use some of the same features (scrolls, accent plants, etc.) and usually use bonsai trees as the center point to the individual displays. A display does not require a bonsai tree as it can display Ikebana, Suiseki or Kusamono as the main subject as well.

To better understand Tokonomas so we may all enjoy this art form, we will be using part of the *Show & Tell* section of our monthly programs as critique segments for Tokonomas our members bring in. We have several well-known bonsai artists



presenting this year and the plan is to use their talents to critique one Tokonoma during their presentation.

The Tokonoma base will be set up for each meeting with a presenter using a black tablecloth and an off-white backdrop on a 6-foot table. The Tokonoma artist will set up their display during the 7:00 PM set up window prior to the meeting.

So everyone has an equal chance to take part in this, we have created a Signup Genius page with the date and presenter that you can sign up with. Please, only sign up once so others may take part as well. Click on the link below to sign up.

### [East Bay Bonsai Society: Tokonoma Signups](#)

Below is some more interesting information about kinds of Tokonoma

*Ikebana (([生け花](#), [活け花](#), 'arranging flowers' or 'making flowers alive') is the [Japanese art of flower arrangement](#).<sup>[1][2]</sup> It is also known as [kadō](#) ([華道](#), 'way of flowers'). The tradition dates back to [Heian period](#) (794–1185), when floral offerings were made at [altars](#). Later, flower arrangements were instead used to adorn the [tokonoma](#) of a traditional Japanese home.*

*Kusamono bonsai is a type of bonsai that involves planting grass found in fields and mountains. Kusamono is a Japanese word that literally means “something made of/from grass”, where Kusa means grass and Mono means (some)thing. Kusamono bonsai can be further divided into 3 subcategories: bamboo, wild grass, and moss. Though Kusamono bonsai traditionally uses grasses/plants in the wild, it now uses a wide variety of plants commonly found in gardening stores.*

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## Holiday Party

Our club's holiday party in December was nothing short of spectacular. There was chicken! There was ham! There was Tokonoma! Over fifty members of all skill levels came together to celebrate their love of bonsai and enjoy each other's company. The festive atmosphere was palpable, with a tiny trees and big smiles decorating the room.



A highlight of the evening was the new tradition of a monthly Tokonoma display. Lisa Harper kicked things off with a stunning





cotoneaster that set the bar high for future displays! Club members all appreciated the perfect balance of the tree and its display.

Following dinner, each person in the room stood up and introduced themselves. It was nice to see members we have not seen in quite some time and meet many of the new members who joined. We also had introductions to our new board members, farewell to our retiring board members, and a presentation to Tom Colby of a Lifetime

membership and donation to the Garden at Lake Merritt in his name. We concluded the evening with a PowerPoint reviewing all the activities we had in 2023.

As the evening drew to a close, the members left feeling inspired and energized by the new tradition and their shared passion for bonsai. It was a night to remember, and a great opportunity to connect with old friends and make new ones!





## Meet the Member: Janet Nelson & Rick Trumm

Rick Trumm and Janet Nelson are not only a married couple, but also two of the most esteemed members of the East Bay Bonsai Club. Having been a part of the club for nearly two decades, they've seen it grow from a modest group of about ten members to a thriving community. Their long-term involvement has allowed them to witness and contribute to the club's evolution, sharing their extensive knowledge and passion for the ancient art of bonsai.

Rick's journey into bonsai began in his teenage years, long before he met Janet. A casual walk in a Concord park introduced him to the fascinating world of miniature trees. The local bonsai community's willingness to share their knowledge and passion deeply influenced him.

This early exposure led Rick to seek formal education in bonsai, studying under Dennis Makishima, a renowned teacher known for his rigorous approach and dedication to imparting the Japanese perspective of the art. Rick credits much of his foundational knowledge to these early



lessons, which emphasized the importance of techniques such as wiring and seasonal care specific to each species.

Professionally, Rick spent his career as a communication tech for the phone company where he helped install the first-ever DSL line. Despite the demanding job, he managed to dedicate an average of an hour a day to his garden, nurturing and shaping his trees with the meticulous care that bonsai demands. His dedication to the craft is evident in his work. The

collected Sierra Juniper shown here won Best in Show, Best Conifer, and People's Choice Award at a Mammoth exhibition!

Janet's path to bonsai began a few years after Rick's, eventually leading her to develop her style

under the guidance of Peter Tea, another respected figure in the bonsai community. While Rick's approach is traditional, focusing on the art of wiring and positioning, Janet's style leans towards minimal wiring, reflecting a slightly different aesthetic philosophy. Despite their differing techniques, their shared passion for bonsai has created a dynamic partnership, both in their personal lives and within the bonsai community.

Outside of bonsai, Janet had a career as a government manager for Social Security, showcasing her capability and leadership, which eventually translated into her significant role within the East Bay Bonsai Club. Not only did she become the first female president of the club, serving two terms, but she also took charge of the newsletter editing, further demonstrating her dedication and commitment to the community.

Together, Rick and Janet have observed that the fundamental techniques of bonsai remain constant. Good wiring and proper branch positioning are



skills that, once mastered, form the basis of excellent bonsai creation. They emphasize that understanding the specific needs of each tree, particularly the timing for activities like repotting and pruning, is crucial. These activities are often dictated by the tree species and season, reflecting

the art's deep connection to the natural world.

Their collective experience and individual approaches to bonsai make Rick and Janet a remarkable duo. They not only contribute their skills and knowledge to the East Bay Bonsai Club but also inspire others to learn and appreciate the intricate art of bonsai (note: your newsletter editor actually joined EBBS after taking

an *Intro to Bonsai* class with Janet at the Garden about four years ago!)

As the club continues to grow and evolve, the couple remains at the heart of its community, guiding and shaping not only the trees but also the people who come to love this ancient art form. Their story is one of shared love, dedication, and a continuous journey of learning and growth, both for themselves and for the larger bonsai community they have helped foster.

***Meet the Member is an opportunity to recognize and get to know some of the people who've played an important role in our club and the bonsai community. If there's someone you think I should include in a future story, please email me at [adam@tractionco.com](mailto:adam@tractionco.com)!***





## Bonsai Calendar

- During the winter most trees are dormant or semi-dormant. That means it's time to repot – just about any kind of trees except tropicals.
- You can also do air/ground layering this time of year.
- It's a good time to restyle conifers too.
- Do one of these, not all three to any one tree! It can be too stressful if you overdo it.
- On [Peter Tea's website](#), he points out, "Due to our mild Winters, it can make a difference repotting in December vs February. It all comes down to how fast you want the Bonsai to grow. Repotting in December generally yields a strong Spring push whereas repotting in February slows down the Spring push. The difference is not huge but can be enough to affect how refined trees continue to develop."

**Refer to the EBBS Bonsai Seasonal guide for more info on care.**

## In Memoriam: Don Meeker

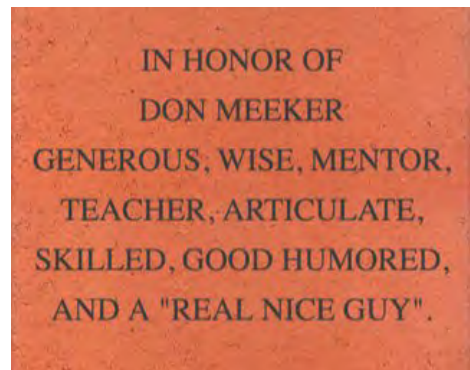
We regretfully announce the passing of a longstanding member of our bonsai community, Don Meeker. A man whose bonsai journey began amidst the scenic beauty of Japan in the 1950s, Don's



passion flourished over decades, deeply rooted in the tranquility of the Japanese Tea Garden in San Francisco. His first foray into bonsai, a Monterey Cypress grown from seeds, marked the beginning of a lifelong dedication.

Don's diverse heritage and rich family history reflected his inclusive spirit and broad interests, extending beyond the meticulous

art of bonsai. His professional life was dedicated to business and management strategies, but it was his work with bonsai that truly defined him. Within our club, Don was known for his extensive knowledge and generosity. He regularly contributed to the club's activities, never hesitating to share his clippings or offer his full support. A few years ago, his friend and fellow club member, Maria Sargent, bought the brick shown here for him at the Garden at Lake Merritt.



His legacy within our community might not be familiar to all members, especially those who are new, but his contributions have left an indelible mark. One such testament to his generosity was this cotoneaster bonsai gifted to fellow member Mike Hylton, a symbol of his kindness and mentorship.

As we reflect on Don's life, we remember him not only for the bonsais that continue to grow but also for his quiet commitment to our community. We extend our deepest sympathies to his family and those who knew him well.



Experience a world of serene beauty and intricate craftsmanship as Sonoma Botanical Garden (SBG), in partnership with the Redwood Empire Bonsai Society (REBS), presents

**Living Sculptures: The Art and Science of Bonsai.**

[Click here to learn more.](#)

**Sonoma Botanical Garden,**  
Sonoma Highway, Glen Ellen, CA

1/5/24– 3/22/24 10am-4pm

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**Member Ads**

Each member can run a free ad in the newsletter once a year. Email Adam at [adam@tractionco.com](mailto:adam@tractionco.com) to submit yours.

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## Upcoming Bonsai Events



**Bay Area Bonsai Associates (BABA) Show**

Sat January 13 at 5pm. followed by a Japanese Black Pine presentation by Bill Castellon at 6:30pm. Sunday January 14 hours are 10am. to 4pm. Lakeside Park Garden Center , 666 Bellevue Ave, Oakland, CA

**60th Winter Silhouettes Show** - Baikoen Bonsai Kenkyukai, Jan 13-14, 10am - 4:30pm, 301 N Baldwin Ave, Arcadia, CA First bonsai show of the year, bonsai trees in their leafless glory. Bonsai, pre-bonsai, pots, and tools for sale. Giant raffle/ auction & entertainment. Demonstrations both days at 1pm.

**Golden Zoom with Mike Lane,** Jan 22, 6:30pm - 9:00pm. Mike will discuss Clip & Grow theory and application: focusing on proportion and wound closure. Clip & grow refers to the growing theory of allowing trunks and branches to attain desired diameter before being cut. *Zoom link will be sent to members a week before the event.*

**The Mammoth Auction & Sale** - Feb 17-18, 9am - 3pm, Lakeside Park Garden Center , 666 Bellevue Ave, Oakland, CA Live auction on Saturday with preview at 12pm and auction at 1pm, Vendors Sunday, 9am - 3pm. Bargain sales 10am - 3pm.

*BGLM is in the process of accepting quality auction and sale trees and related bonsai items as donations and consignments for the Mammoth Show. Point of contact is George Haas, Mammoth Chair, at [gwhaas@comcast.net](mailto:gwhaas@comcast.net). All auction items must be received by January 6 in order to be photographed and included in the auction catalog. All proceeds support the Bonsai Garden at Lake Merritt.*

**San Marino Bonsai-A-Thon 2024** - Feb 24-25, 10am - 5pm, 1151 Oxford Rd, San Marino, CA 91108 – This is a fundraiser for the Golden State Bonsai Federation Collection at The Huntington Library, Art Collections and Botanical Gardens, Brody Botanical Center.

**American Bonsai Association, Sacramento's Annual Show** Apr 13-14, 10am - 4pm, Sacramento, 3330 McKinley Blvd, Sacramento, CA 95816 – Headliner, TYLER SHERROD, Professional Bonsai Artist/Teacher from Georgia, will conduct a live demonstration each day at 1:30PM.