



# THE TREE SHRINKER

Next EBBS Newsletter: **April Fools, 2026**



## The Bold New Bonsai Style: Megasai!

### The World of Tiny Trees is Shaken with Massive New 'Megasai' Category at Kokufu!

The emergence of "Megasai" bonsai (like the Redwood shown in its stunning, labelled pot above), the prestigious Kokofu World Bonsai Forum has officially announced a groundbreaking new exhibition category. Megasai, defined as "giant planting" and the complete inverse of traditional bonsai, will celebrate massive, full-scale trees meticulously cultivated in comically oversized, decorative vessels.

Members of the East Bay Bonsai Society have embraced this innovative new approach to bonsai. At our next meeting featuring Lightning Talks, club president Addison Galambos will be teaching a workshop on how to design your very own Megasai. According to Addison, "Being that these are Lightning Talks, it'll be important that members not stand under the Megasai. Very dangerous."

Club members can cultivate your own Megasai. Simply follow these steps:

- Plant a Coastal Redwood or Giant Sequoia sapling directly in the middle of your front yard.
- Do absolutely no pruning. Throw away your concave cutters.
- Wait roughly 200 to 600 years.
- Stand at the base of your 300-foot tree and admire the majestic trunk taper.

We recommend a very, very large ceramic pot if you plan to move it indoors for the winter.

REAL

# THE TREE SHRINKER



Next EBBS Meeting: **April 8, 2026**

## 2026 EBBS Schedule

### Regular Meetings

2nd Wednesday, every month

**April 8** - Member Lightning Talks, 7:30pm

- Michael Szabo on Monterey Cypress from seed
- Lisa Harper on accent plants
- Addison on Kokufu 100th Anniversary

**May 13** - Nick Vila on Air Layering, 7:30pm + pre-meeting wiring workshop with Addison Galambos at 6:30

**June 10** - Jerry Carpenter on Tropicals at 7:30pm + pre-meeting workshop at 6:30

### July 8 - EBBS Annual Auction

Trees and other auction items to arrive at 5:30. Viewing will begin at 6:00.

**August 12** - Speaker TBD at 7:30pm + pre-meeting workshop at 6:30

**Sept 2** - Sam Tan on Redwoods, 7:30pm + pre-meeting workshop

**Oct 7** - Lucy Judd will once again delight us with accent plantings at 7:30 (no pre-meeting workshop)

**Nov 11** - 7:30 workshop to get trees ready for the show.

**Nov 13-15** - Annual Show-setup is at 6:00 Friday the 13th .

**Dec 9** - Annual Holiday Party, set up at 6:00.

Check out the monthly note from the Garden on page 2 for a schedule of *Intro to Bonsai* classes.

## April Meeting

### Lightning Talks

Kaboom! This month, get ready for Lightning Talks!

Zap! First, we'll have Mike Szabo teaching us how to grow that California classic – Monterey Cypress – from wee little seed!

Pow! Lisa Harper is going to share some very big knowledge about some very small plants – accents!

Snap! El Presidente, Addison Galambos, will regale us with tales and pretty pictures from his trip to Japan for Kokufu.

**Thanks to Michael Jensen-Akula, Bill Castellon and Emily Gallivan for bringing refreshments to our March meeting.**

**Get ready to mark your calendars for the new meeting dates, times and events.**

**The annual auction will take place in July and the show will take place in November this year.**

We've updated the **2026 EBBS Schedule** with the rest of this year's events.

In August we will also have the annual picnic, date TBD.

Due to the city having holidays on the second Wednesday of the month in September and October, our meetings will be held one week earlier. The newsletter will also be distributed one week earlier on the last Wednesday of the previous month.

## Board meetings

### Board meeting dates (7:30 PM via Google Meet).

May 4, June 1, June 29, August 3, August 24, September 28, November 2, November 30

Meetings are held via Google Meet. Contact Addison Galambos ([barcalod@gmail.com](mailto:barcalod@gmail.com)) to be invited to attend a meeting.

## Thank you from the Bonsai Garden

I want to thank everyone who volunteered at the Bonsai Garden at Lake Merritt's Mammoth Fundraiser. It was a HUGE success financially and everyone seemed to enjoy themselves.

**The BGLM is looking for more volunteers, see attached link for the volunteer information form on the website. When you sign up, the form will come to Suzanne Muller.**

### Join Us as a Bonsai Garden Volunteer

We are looking for the following volunteer positions:

- Docent coordinator and scheduler
- Bookkeeper
- Docents
- Security manager for the collection

Please contact me for information regarding the description for each position listed if you are interested.

– Suzanne Muller, Director  
[queueinteriors@comcast.net](mailto:queueinteriors@comcast.net)

## Intro to Bonsai at the Garden

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Every month, EBBS Members volunteer at the workshop in the Lake Merritt Bonsai Garden to teach the "Bonsai Curious" about our awesome hobby. Classes take place at 1pm on a Saturday.

This year's line-up:

April 26 - **Nick Vila**

May 24 - **Janet Nelson**

June 28 - **Addison Galambos**

July 26 - **Michael Jensen-Akula**

August 23 - **Janet Nelson**

September 27 - **Nick Vila**

October 25 - **Tom Colby**

November 22 - **Addison Galambos**



## Gauging Interest in a Beginner Wiring Workshop Series

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We're excited to invite you to a **Free Pre-Meeting Workshop** on **Wednesday, May 13th at 6:30pm**, held before our regular meeting (7:30-9:30pm).

### Hands-on Wiring Study Group – Beginner Friendly!

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This will be a hands-on mini course hosted by the club, running **1-4 sessions depending on interest**.

We'll cover the following and more!

- Why you should wire and what it tries to achieve
- Proper wiring techniques
- How to create movement and bends
- Copper vs aluminum
- Wire thickness selection
- How to avoid wire bite
- Anchoring techniques

**Wire and supplies will be provided** (bring wire cutters and pliers if you have them!).

If you're interested in attending, please email Addison at [barcalod@gmail.com](mailto:barcalod@gmail.com) so we can get an approximate headcount.

Our goal is for you to be able to wire your first tree by the end of the classes.

– Addison Galambos

## February Meeting: Randall Lee

Long time member Randall Lee provided the March demo on *Chamaecyparis* a.k.a. Hinoki Cypress. He has worked on these trees for many years and has studied with both Peter Tea and Adam Toth. He has also provided classes at the Shohin convention and elsewhere.

In the demo, he developed a rock planting with a couple of very nice *Chamaecyparis* 'Tsukomo' he obtained from Mike Cullen (six year old cuttings). He also added several accent plants to the rock (erodium, dwarf cotoneaster, and a small fern).

Randall is renowned for putting together spectacular rock bases for these plantings, using glue and other concoctions, setting up pockets in the rock with wire embedded and set in place with a combination of hydraulic concrete, coarse sand and 'fine' super glue. The small pockets require the use of 50% bonsai soil and 50% 'muck' (a mix of bonsai fines and sphagnum moss).



There is a learning curve to keeping a rock planting in a 'just right' sun and watering schedule. The rock planting needs more water ('you can't overwater') so he covers with moss as well. He recommends leaving this new project in morning sun for about six months until the trees show sign of healthy growth. He generally uses liquid fertilizer. There is some automatic root pruning, so 'repotting' is usually not needed for many years.

For *Chamaecyparis* bonsai in general, Randall favors Wells Special, as it has often been propagated from cuttings and one can avoid the suboptimal grafts seen on many other varieties. Get starters with a good (or no) graft and a naturally a tighter growth habit. These are notorious for not back-budding, and they are apically dominant (the phenomenon where a plant's main shoot tip inhibits the growth of side branches directing energy toward vertical growth) as well so you need to start early on cutting back and work on them regularly.

This is one of the conifers we can pinch, generally in June and September (but don't pinch all the time!)...as long as the tree is strong and growing. Pinching with your fingers will provide a more refined look, whereas, pruning back will give a slightly coarser, more natural look.

There is also a learning curve on the proper pruning of the gently curving fronds to maintain a horizontal branching pattern. Be careful to not knock off proximal branching on the tree. You will need to prune back to these proximal branches and you will usually get good regrowth. This should be done every year... leaving a Hinoki on its own will often lead to denser branching leading to inner branch loss. If branches get too leggy, you can visibly shorten them by adding some bends.

*Chamaecyparis* species like water--provide a good bonsai mix (Randall uses 50% akadama/25% pumice/25% lava) for drainage, then water regularly and don't allow them to go dry. They like sun, but can sunburn as well, so provide some summer protection, especially right after pruning. One last tip--he does not cut off more than 50% of the roots when repotting, assuming a healthy tree.

Randall also provided a second (Wells special) Hinoki for the benefit drawing (Andy Chan won the tree and Kris Meehan won the rock planting – congrats!), and Mike Cullen also provided several nice trees, all developed from cuttings, for the drawing.

We underestimate the extra effort Randall has provided for our club. Randall spent quite a bit of time and energy to make the rock base (not easy BTW) and has a special ability to do rock plantings that we are grateful to benefit from. As a personal note, Randall (and Bill C. recently) provided great demo material (at a clear cost discount compared with our paid outside speakers).

- Michael Jensen-Akula



# Mammoth Auction & Sale

Our community showed up in force for the recent Mammoth Bonsai Auction & Sale, packing the venue to standing room only. EBBS Club president Addison Galambos took the podium as auctioneer, expertly guiding bidders through over 100 trees in what turned out to be an exceptionally successful event. The auction raised significant funds for the bonsai garden at Lake Merritt while connecting quality trees with enthusiastic new caretakers. It's gratifying to see our community come together like this - supporting a public garden that introduces countless visitors to the art form we love, while giving members the chance to expand their own collections.

Congratulations to Addison for orchestrating such a memorable event, and thanks to everyone who volunteered, bid, and contributed to this success. Enjoy these photos from the weekend!



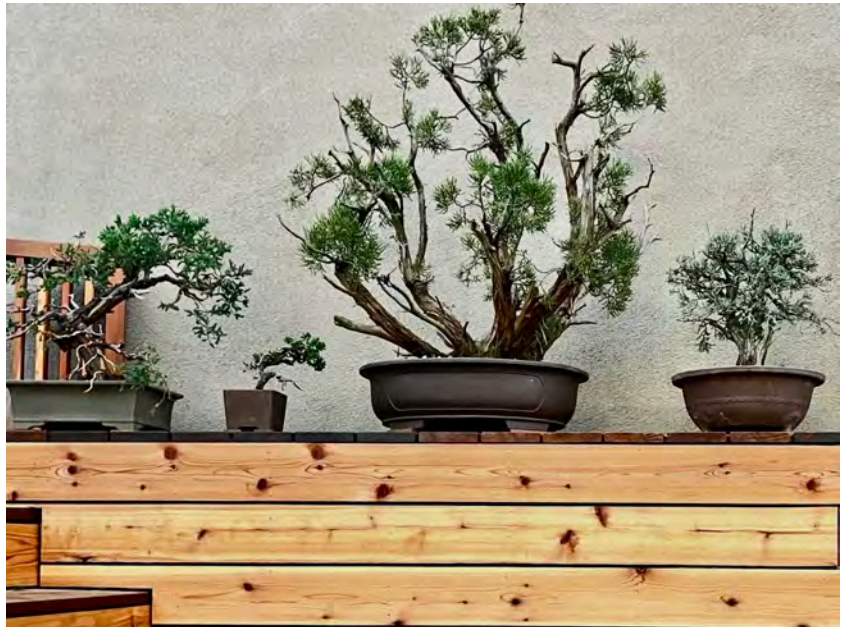


## Bonsai Calendar

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- The first 2-3 weeks of April is generally a slow time for Bonsai.
- It's time for pinching! We tend to pinch the top of the tree to keep it dividing and slow whereas we tend to grow out lower branches for size. When the tree is well developed, Pinching can be done on the entire tree.
- Days are getting longer and warmer, so you'll need to pick up the frequency of your watering. Keep an eye on your soil so it doesn't get dry. Newly repotted trees drain faster, so don't worry about over-watering those.
- Consider setting up zones in your garden if you want to optimize care for different trees
- Continue to fertilize conifers in April, particularly junipers, depending on how aggressively you want to grow your trees. Wait until May 1 to start fertilizing deciduous trees. Too much fertilizer too early could produce long internodes!
- Check old wiring for biting as trees start pushing growth and Rotate trees regularly!

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



## This Spring, get in The Zone!

Spring is an exciting time for bonsai geeks.

Bud tips swell. Candles stretch. Trees you were convinced were dead begin quietly pushing green again. And the bench that looked calm in February becomes a small ecosystem of growth, pests, watering needs, and the occasional mystery.

In other words: spring is when the action begins.

It's also when a lot of the year's success or frustration gets quietly set in motion.

I'm particularly concerned. I just had a new deck built and my architect had the clever idea to build shelves to show off my trees right into the deck. I love it, but there's one problem I'm determined to navigate:

The sun and shade zones in my house are a roving target. The shelves on the left side of the picture don't get sun until 11am. The upper shelves against the wall of the house don't see sun until 1pm, the time when it beats down hottest. There is one strip along the side of the house that gets early morning sun and gets covered by shade by noon. And another shelf at the far end of my yard gets sun from about 9am to 4pm.

### The Hidden Tool: Zones

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I did some research (yes, I used ChatGPT) and learned about one of the simplest ways to solve that puzzle, something many gardeners use but bonsai growers sometimes overlook: **garden zones based on sun and water needs.**

When you group trees with similar preferences together, suddenly a lot of decisions become easier.

You water a bench instead of ten individual pots. You stop worrying that one tree is drowning while another is dehydrating. And you spend more time enjoying the trees rather than negotiating with them.

## The Dry Zone

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Some trees love the kind of sun that would make a maple faint.

Think of these as your Mediterranean and mountain species – trees that naturally grow where drainage is excellent and rain is intermittent.

Typical residents of this bench might include:

- pines
- junipers
- California juniper
- olives
- Monterey cypress
- boxwood

These trees generally prefer deep watering followed by some drying, and they're often happiest in the brightest, warmest part of the garden. If you have a spot that gets strong afternoon sun, this is usually where these trees thrive.



Here is a picture of my dry zone. I had problems overwatering my favorite olive last year, so I'm hoping to avoid that this summer. I've also got

junipers, olives, pines and a boxwood all organized here. A few of these were replanted with a heavy mix of large lava with just a little akadama to encourage vigorous growth, so I'm keeping a close eye on those and may move those together since it's a dryer soil mix to make sure I don't overdo it.

## The Moderate Zone

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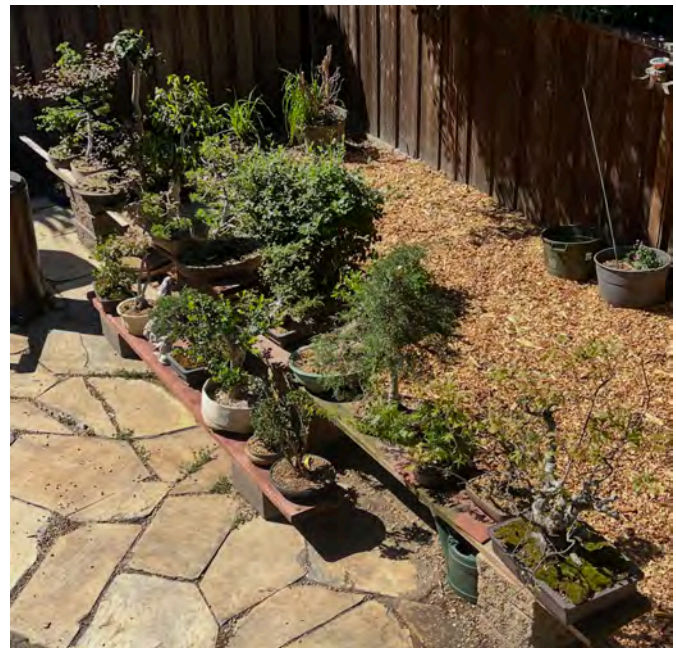
The middle bench is home to trees that like good light and regular watering but don't want to dry out completely or sit in constantly wet soil.

This is the flexible bench, where a lot of species fit comfortably.

Typical residents might include:

- oak
- plum
- elm
- ficus
- crêpe myrtle
- Monterey cypress (depending on your climate)

All of which you can see below in my Moderate Zone!



These trees appreciate consistent watering and strong light, but they're forgiving enough that you won't upset them if conditions swing a little from week to week.



## The Moisture Lovers

Finally there are the trees that look at a dry pot and take it personally.

These species prefer cooler light and more consistent moisture, and they tend to be happiest where they get gentler sun earlier in the day.

This group often includes:

- Japanese maples
- redwood
- pygmy cypress (*Chamaecyparis*)

Place them where the light is bright but not punishing and where watering can stay a bit more regular. We've probably all had Japanese maple leaves get fried on a really hot day, and if you've ever been up to the Northern California or Oregon coast, you know that redwoods thrive in the cool rain forest. Same with pygmy cypress (a good rule of thumb is that if you bought it from Bob Shimon, it probably likes water a lot).



## Why This Matters in Spring

According to my research, the reason zones become so helpful right now is that growth rates diverge quickly once temperatures rise.

The maple may suddenly be pushing leaves like it's late May. The juniper is quietly doing its slow, deliberate thing. The pine is beginning its candle stretch.

Trying to treat them all the same is not quite like watering a cactus and a fern with the same schedule – but it's not too far off.

Zones don't eliminate the need to observe your trees, but they should make the garden easier to manage.

## A Small Change with a (Possible) Big Payoff

I don't know if my zone experiment will work, but I'm optimistic. I'm planning to be particularly vigilant of those junipers by the wall of the house to make sure they are getting enough sun to thrive.

But this is how we learn, and I'm looking forward to a long spring, summer and fall of trees in my back yard staying healthy, happy and green!

– Adam Kleinberg

Online Tour  
April 4-5, 2026  
10am-5pm

In-person Tour  
Sat May 2, 2026  
Bayside gardens  
Sun May 3, 2026  
Inland gardens  
10am-5pm



## Bringing Back the Natives Garden Tour & Green Home Features Showcase

A tour of 60 Alameda and Contra Costa county gardens and homes

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

### 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.

### Newsletter Contributors

**Editor:** Adam Kleinberg

**Contributors:** Adam Kleinberg, Michael Jensen-Akula, Addison Galambos, Bev Martinez, Suzanne Muller, ChatGPT

**Photography:** Adam Kleinberg, Bev Martinez

## Upcoming Bonsai Events

### American Bonsai Association Sacramento Bonsai Show and Sale

Apr 11, 2026, 7:00 PM - Apr 12, 2026, 11:00 PM, Sacramento Garden and Arts Center, 3330 McKinley Blvd, Sacramento, CA. Beginner workshops, member/vendor sales, and daily demos by headliner Jennifer Price (1:30-3:30 PM), followed by a raffle.

### Modesto Bonsai Club 43rd Annual Spring Show

Apr 18, 2026, 10:00 AM - 4:00 PM, Stanislaus County Harvest Hall, 3800 Cornucopia Way, Modesto, CA. Please join us at our 43rd Annual Spring Bonsai Show. Demonstration by Sam Adina at 1:30pm. Exhibits, sales, plants, pots and more. Free admission and parking. Visit our website at [www.modestobonsaiclub.org](http://www.modestobonsaiclub.org) to learn more.

### Kusamura Bonsai Club 66th Annual Show

Apr 18, 2026, 12:00 PM - Apr 19, 2026, 4:00 PM, Addison School, 1045 Webster St, Palo Alto, CA. 60+ bonsai on display. Headliner Jennifer Price: demo Saturday 1-3; workshop Sunday 1-3

### Santa Cruz Bonsai Kai and Monterey Bay Area Cactus & Succulent Society Show & Sale

Apr 25, 2026, 10:00 AM - Apr 26, 2026, 5:00 PM, Capitola Mall (Former Sears Location), 1855 41st Ave, Capitola, CA. Please join us for a combined show featuring bonsai, cactus and succulents. Beginner Bonsai Workshops on Saturday and Sunday, limited space. For more info: <https://www.santacruzbonsaikai.com/> Demonstrations on Saturday & Sunday from 1:30 pm-3pm. Vendor and member sales. Raffles throughout the day.

### Bay Area Satsuki Aikokai and Yamato Bonsai Show

May 30-31, 2026, Sat 10-5; Sun 10-4, Lakeside Park Garden Center, 666 Bellevue Ave, Oakland, CA. Come join us for a combined show featuring the beautiful colors of Satsuki azalea bonsai, Pines, Junipers, and other living bonsai art forms. Round-robin demonstration on Saturday from 1pm-3pm.

### Sei Boku Bonsai Kai Annual Show and Sale

Jun 13, 2026, 7:00 PM - Jun 14, 2026, 11:00 PM, San Mateo Garden Center, 605 Parkside Way, San Mateo, CA. Demo Saturday 1-3 (Steve Jang) and workshop Sunday 1-3 (Valerie Monroe), plus raffles, clinic, and sales.

### Valley Bonsai Society 17th Annual Show

Jun 20, 2026, 10:00 AM - Jun 21, 2026, 4:00 PM, Alden Lane Nursery, 981 Alden Ln, Livermore, CA. Demo at 1pm both days with the finished tree raffled after; bonsai supplies for sale.

### Redwood Empire Bonsai Society (REBS) Bonsai Show

Aug 22, 2026, 10:00 AM - Aug 23, 2026, 4:00 PM, Rohnert Park Community Center, 5401 Snyder Ln, Rohnert Park, CA. Headliner Sam Tan with formal displays, workshops, sales, and auctions.