



THE TREE SHRINKER

Next EBBS Meeting: **June 10, 2026**

2026 EBBS Schedule

Regular Meetings

2nd Wednesday, every month at 7:30pm
(check for pre-meeting workshops below)

June 10 - Jerry Carpenter on
Tropicals at 7:30pm

July 8 - EBBS Annual Auction

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

August 12 - Andrew Robson 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.



June Meeting Jerry Carpenter on Tropicals

Jerry Carpenter is a long-respected figure in the Bay Area bonsai community, best known for his deep work with tropical species. A veteran member of the Kusamura Bonsai Club in Palo Alto, Jerry has spent years exploring the unique rewards – and demands – of growing tropicals as bonsai.

Tropical species like ficus, bougainvillea, jade, and schefflera offer fast growth, year-round activity, and dramatic surface roots – but they require careful management through Bay Area winters and a different styling mindset than native conifers or deciduous trees. Jerry will share what he's learned about selecting the right species for our climate, managing growth cycles, indoor overwintering, and styling approaches that take full advantage of what tropicals do best.

Whether you're already growing tropicals or just curious about getting started, this is a presentation worth showing up early for.

Thanks to Steve Davis, Michael Szabo & Bev Martinez for bringing refreshments to our June meeting.

Auction Update

The EBBS Annual Auction is Almost Here!

The East Bay Bonsai Society's yearly auction will be held on Wednesday, July 8, 2026 at the Lakeside Garden Center. Mark your calendars, bring your checkbook, cash, or credit card, and get ready to add to your collection!

We are excited to have Addison Galambos and Nick Vila as auctioneers this year for an energetic evening of bidding.

Schedule of Events:

5:30 PM: Set-up begins

6:00 PM: Preview begins

7:00 PM: Bidding starts!

Information for Sellers:

(This year selling is limited to only members)

Prep Your Items: Clean up trees by pulling weeds, removing dead leaves/needles, and trimming branches if needed. Clean pots of dirt, old screens, and wire (a light film of oil can help bring out the color or sheen). Tools should be free of dirt and rust.

Limits & Pricing: There is a limit of 10 items per seller. Items must maintain a minimum value of \$30. You may set a reserve price if you want the item to sell for at least a minimum value.

Bundling: Several items may be bundled together as a "Lot" to be auctioned as one item. Grouped items must be packaged together with shrink-wrap, tape, or boxed.

Proceeds: Consignment sellers will receive 75% of the sale price (25% goes to EBBS to support its programs). Donation sellers authorize 100% of the sale price to go to EBBS.

Required Forms & Tree Tags

(Attached to this Email, check out the new and improved version!)

Seller Log Sheets & Tags: A completed 3-part tag must be attached to each auction item before it is placed on the preview tables.

ID Format: Use your 3-letter initials followed by a sequential number (e.g., SMM01). Be sure to repeat this information on all 3 sections of the tag.

Tag Prep: Tags should be clipped between sections for easy release, but not cut all the way through.

Help Us Promote on Social Media!

This year, we are advertising on Facebook and Instagram. If you have any videos of the trees you will be selling, please send them to Addison at barcalod@gmail.com.

Volunteers Needed:

We still have a few volunteer spots open! If you have not already been contacted by the auction coordinators, please plan to be at the Garden Center by 5:30 PM on Wednesday to help set up tables and chairs. [Link to Auction Signup Form]

Questions? Please reach out to our auction coordinators:

Suzanne Muller: 925-787-1349 |
queueinteriors@comcast.net

Bev Martinez: 925-437-2347 |
Martinez_Bev@yahoo.com

May Meeting: Nick Vila

If you've gotten to know Nick, you know he's an over-achiever! I asked him for a recap of his presentation in May and he sat down and wrote a comprehensive guide.



Air Layering: Creating New Trees from Your Existing Collection

Last month, I presented for the club on the topic of air-layering; one of the most valuable tools for any bonsai artist focusing on deciduous trees. Whether you're looking to collect material from your landscape, correct a nebari problem, or convert sacrificial growth into new trees instead of throwing sacrifice branches away air layering offers so many opportunities to help us achieve our bonsai goals and enjoy an incredibly cool thing plants can do - form adventitious roots anywhere along the existing structure!

How to air layer

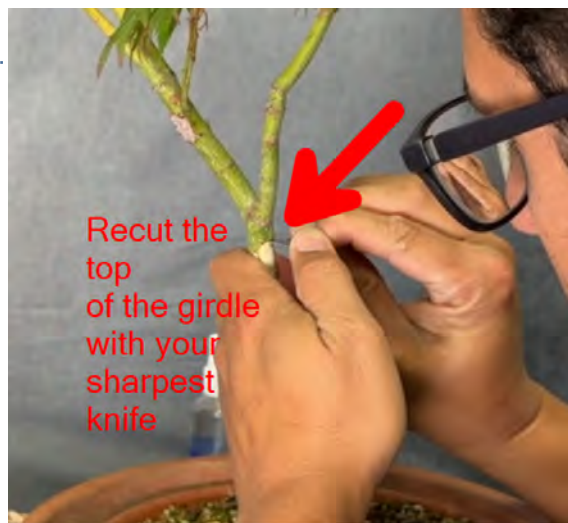
The process begins by selecting a healthy branch and removing a ring of bark – typically 1 to 1.5 times the branch diameter in width – down to the xylem. The cambium that remains on the top-side of the girdle is treated with rooting hormone, then wrapped in moist sphagnum moss and sealed tightly with clear plastic film.

Over the course of the subsequent months, as long as we water the air layer correctly (not exactly an easy thing) roots will form. We can leave the air layer on the parent tree for multiple seasons if needed; the goal is to give the process enough time for a high-quality radial root spread to be produced. Especially in the Bay Area there is virtually no risk to the air layers from freezing over winter. Many species can be air layered in 2-3 months however most conifers and many other trees may require multiple growing seasons to produce enough roots to be separated.

Tips and tricks for air layering success

(including a few important points I forgot to mention in my presentation):

Use sharp and sterile tools - after girdling the tree I always use a fresh razor blade to go back and re-cut the cambium above the girdle for the cleanest possible cut. This is where roots will form and having a clean cut here can be very helpful





Bonsai Calendar

Water

Keep an eye on the heat! Water 2 or even 3 times on hot days if needed to keep trees moist in the heat.

De-Candling

In the Bay area, June is the time to de-candle Japanese Black and Red Pines. In hotter climates, wait until July to de-candle!

Fertilizing

Continue regular feeding of deciduous trees and conifers. Stop feeding pines after decandling and do not fertilize Satsuki Azaleas

Styling/Pruning

Watch for wire biting and remove old wire at this time. Defoliate your Japanese Maples except for lower branches that you are growing out to thicken.

This is an important time for cutting back and thinning your trees. Cutting back is used to create a division to ramify the tree or to weaken the tree in an area like at the top. Thinning is used when you have too many branches in one area or branches that are too thick in an area—removing them makes the remaining branches stronger.

Insect and disease control

Apply fungicide and pesticide once a month as a preventative. Immediately treat any fungus or pest problems you discover. Safer Soap or liquid Sevin can be used to control aphids

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



Create interesting angles with the shape of your girdle. You don't have to cut the top half of the girdle into a flat circular shape, you can cut an angle to provide more interest to your new tree

Choose rooting hormone that is appropriate for your tree:

- **Clonex** - 0.03% IBA – Great for Japanese Maples, Junipers and other species that air layer easily – This is a low concentration strength
- **Hormex** - Variety of Concentrations – Use based on label recommendations for hard to layer species like Oak or Cypress
- **Dip n Gro** - Strongest concentration available – Must be diluted – Use to mix your own strength of hormone concentrations – Great for slow to air layer species like Beech and Hornbeam – follow label instructions for dilution ratios – Michael Hagedorn recommends 5 parts water to 1 part DnG.

- **Apply rooting hormone at the exact location where you want roots** – painting the trunk up and down with hormone will produce roots in unpredictable locations and work against your goals of creating a beautiful nebari right at the base of the new tree.



- **After girdling the tree wait between 30 minutes anywhere up to 24 hours before applying the air layer** - this gives the exposed tissue time to dry and will make it obvious if you have not removed all the cambium - cambial tissue that remains on the girdled section will be visibly darker and distinct from the underlying xylem. We need to remove any remaining portions that appear darker than the rest of the girdled area. If you don't remove all the cambium, there is a much higher chance of failure as the tree may heal across the girdled section.
- **Judging when the air layer has produced enough roots can be particularly challenging.** Ultimately separating the air layer is not only a question of root quantity but also root quality. If you don't have a nice radial root spread you may want to leave the air layer in place for another month or allow it to stretch into the next growing season. This usually means you will need to open the air layer delicately and tease away enough moss to evaluate the presence of roots and their exact location. This is doable as long as you proceed cautiously!
- **Do not prune any areas of a branch or trunk being air layered.**
- **Repotted trees will be less vigorous and slower to air layer;** avoid performing air layer in the same season that a tree was repotted for better results.

Advanced methods

Beyond the standard method of using sphagnum moss wrapped in plastic, I have come across many different innovations on the air layering process that offer interesting benefits but also increase the amount of care and attention the air layer will need. I have seen air layers done with plastic containers and bonsai soil, mesh wrapping, hard plastic air layering spheres and even with concrete to girdle the trunk. There are lots of variations of the foundational technique that may help create even better results. Recently I attempted to perform an air layer based on a Japanese technique I heard that uses balsa wood to force air layered roots to spread outward:

- by Nick Vila

Useful reference links

[GSBF Golden Zoom April 2025 Presents Scott Elser discussing and demonstrating air-layering.](#)

[Air Layer Instructions on Japanese Maple Pre Bonsai](#)

[How to air layer cryptomeria for bonsai - Bonsai Tonight](#)

[The science of air-layering | Bonsai Nut](#)

From the Bonsai Garden

Join Us as a Bonsai Garden Volunteer! See the link below for the volunteer information form on the website. When you sign up, the form will come to Suzanne Muller. We are looking for the following volunteer positions:

- Docent coordinator and scheduler
- Bookkeeper
- Docents
- Instagram Manager
- Director Assistant
- Writers for Articles & Publications
- Volunteers sign up on website at <https://bonsailakemerritt.com/>

Please contact Suzanne Muller (queueinteriors@comcast.net) for info about each position.

Join the conversation!

facebook.com/groups/ebbs

facebook.com/groups/ebbsmembers

instagram.com/eastbaybonsai/

twitter.com/EastBayBonsai

www.eastbaybonsai.org

Member Ads

Each member can run a free ad in the newsletter once a year. Email Adam at adam@tractionco.com to submit yours.

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From the Editor

Hey EBBS members,

This will be the last newsletter I'll be editing for a while. It's been a pleasure putting this together for you these past three and a half years. I've got a bit too much on my plate at the moment, so I need to step back and let someone else take the reins.

All of the positive feedback I've gotten has been deeply appreciated. I've really enjoyed this experience, I've learned a lot and am truly grateful to be a member of this club.

Don't forget to pinch.

Adam

Upcoming Bonsai Events

Sei Boku Bonsai Kai Annual Show and Sale

Jun 13 - 14, 2026, 10am-4pm, 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 - Jun 21, 2026, 10:00 AM - 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.

Marin Bonsai Club

Jul 01 -05, 2026, 11:00 AM - 6:00 PM, Marin County Fair – Exhibit Hall, 10 Ave of the Flags, San Rafael, CA, See the bonsai. Hear their journeys.

East Bay Bonsai Society Annual Auction

Jul 8, 2026, 6:00 PM - 9:30 PM, Lakeside Garden Center, 666 Bellevue Ave, Oakland, CA, Join the East Bay Bonsai Society for our Annual Auction at the Garden Center at Lake Merritt!

5:30 PM: Set-up begins (members only)

6:00 PM: Preview begins

7:00 PM: Bidding starts!

Redwood Empire Bonsai Society (REBS) Bonsai Show

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

Naka Memorial Exhibit

Aug 22-23, 2026, 11:00 AM - 4:00 PM, 244 San Pedro St #505, Los Angeles, CA. The Naka Memorial Exhibition is a juried bonsai show. It is comprised of individual practitioners and hobbyists who desire to share their love of bonsai with the public. Submissions are open until June 15, 2026. Contact nakamemorialexhibit@gmail.com or nakamemorialexhibit.com for more info.

Intro to Bonsai Classes at The Garden

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