



# THE TREE SHRINKER

Next EBBS Meeting: **Oct 8, 2025**

## it's the **BIG SHOW ISSUE!**

Relive every incredible moment of our fantastic 2025 EBBS Show!

### 2025 EBBS Schedule

#### Regular Meetings

2nd Wednesday, every mo, @7:30pm with pre-meeting workshop @6:30pm

**Oct 8** - Bill Castellon, Pines

**Oct 26**- Intro to Bonsai at The Garden\* with Tom Colby

**Nov 12** - Eric Schrader cedrus bonsai management

**Annual EBBS board election, November 12. Do you want to serve on our Board of Directors? Please contact Tom Fedor ([thomas.fedor@att.net](mailto:thomas.fedor@att.net)), Laurien Fiddes ([laurienfiddes@gmail.com](mailto:laurienfiddes@gmail.com)) or Bev Martinez ([martinez\\_bev@yahoo.com](mailto:martinez_bev@yahoo.com)) to nominate yourself or your other favorite candidates.**

**Nov 23** - Intro to Bonsai at The Garden\* with Addison Galambos

\* at the Bonsai Garden workshop



### October meeting

## Bill Castellon Shares His Pine Wisdom

We're excited to have our own EBBS member Bill Castellon as this month's presenter, sharing his deep knowledge of pine cultivation and care. For those who haven't learned from Bill before, his practical approach and decades of experience make even complex pine techniques accessible and engaging.

Bill brings a unique perspective that spans his work as a professional landscaper and aesthetic pruner, giving him intuitive understanding of how pines respond to different techniques. His expertise was shaped through eight years of study under master Japanese garden builder Mas Imazumi, whom he met through EBBS, and later through an internship at Kinkaku-ji—the Golden Pavilion—in Kyoto in 2001.

Bill's teaching is refreshingly practical. Rather than rigid rules, he offers thoughtful guidelines adapted to our Bay Area growing conditions. When it comes to decandling black pines, he notes that while Japanese shohin artists might wait until July 15th for exceptionally small needles, our local climate suggests we shouldn't push past July 4th.

His expertise encompasses both Japanese Black Pine and Japanese Red Pine, and he's particularly known for shohin work. Bill understands these trees' seasonal rhythms intimately—from recognizing when candles begin moving in late February through fall care including thinning, cutting back, and needle pulling.

Don't miss this opportunity to learn from one of the Bay Area's most respected pine specialists. Whether you're new to pines or looking to refine your techniques, Bill's presentation promises valuable insights you can take directly to your bench.

**Thanks to Alise Offeman, Mike Cullen and Bev Martinez. for bringing refreshments**

## The 2025 Show: A HUGE SUCCESS

Our 2025 show is officially in the books—and what a fantastic event it was! I was amazed by the turnout, the caliber of the show trees, and the strong vendor presence this year. A huge thank you goes to Tom Colby and Suzanne Muller for curating such a beautiful exhibition. Shoutout to Addison for leading two sold-out beginner workshops, helping us share the love of bonsai with new faces. Thanks also to Tom Fedor for keeping us fueled with coffee, donuts, and lunch, and to Jeremy for capturing the show through his photography. Lisa, we appreciate your guidance on the finer points of show prep, and Bev, thank you for printing tree cards and running the member sales table all weekend. Special thanks as well to Janice Dilbeck for coordinating and assigning tokonomas. And of course, a heartfelt thank you to every member who contributed trees or volunteered—your efforts made this year’s show a true success!



Once again this year, attendees were invited to cast ballots for their favorite trees across several categories. It was a joy to watch people wander the exhibit, thoughtfully considering which displays to vote for. Most of the submissions came from visitors with little or no bonsai experience, making it a wonderful way to introduce newcomers to the qualities we value in the art of bonsai.

Here are the results from this year’s attendee ballots.

– Mike Szabo

### **Overall Favorite**

*Crepe myrtle — JIN (#13)*

*Kelly's prostrate redwood — LC (#37)*

*Hinoki cypress — AO (#18)*



**Favorite Large Tree**

- San Jose juniper* — DOG (#68)
- Crepe myrtle* — JIN (#13)
- California juniper* — MCS (#12)



**Favorite Small Tree**

- 5 tree display* — DOG (#61)
- Firethorn* — RAL (#57)



**Curviest Tree**

- Shimpaku juniper* — AO (#53)
- Creeping juniper* — BCM (#49)
- Juniper chinensis* — THC (#23)



**Oldest-Looking Tree**

- Cork bark oak* — RJT (#15)
- California juniper* — BGV (#40)
- Sierra juniper* — RJT (#38)



**Most Angular Tree**

*Boxwood* — JLD (#45)

*Creeping juniper* — BCM (#49)

*Japanese black pine* — LCH, PG, SMM (#42)

*Needle juniper* — BCM (#25)

*Kelly's prostrate redwood* — LC (#37)

Special recognition goes to Bryan Morgan's creeping juniper, which earned high votes for both "Most Angular" and "Most Curvy." Quite the accomplishment!



**Most Colorful**

*Bougainvillea* — ??? (#26)

*Crepe myrtle* — JIN (#13)



**Most Creative**

*Japanese garden juniper* — RAL (#8)

*Crepe myrtle* — JIN (#13)

*Kelly's prostrate redwood* — LC (#37)

*Orange honeysuckle* — JS (#35)

*California juniper* — BGV (#40)



## Congrats on a great show!

Congratulations to everybody who participated in the show! The trees looked fantastic – I for one take great pride in being part of a club with such a talented group of bonsai artists! There was a constant flow of people coming to see our work all weekend long! The sale was a success! The workshops for both experienced club members and first time newbies were packed! And, we all loved meeting, learning and spending time with our headliner Michael Hagadorn

A huge thank you goes out to all of the 35 volunteers who helped make our show a success, but especially to our show chair Michael Szabo, Bev Martinez, Suzanne Muller Tom Colby, Tom Colby, Michael Jensen-Akula, Lisa Harper, Michael Hylton, Janice Dilbeck, John Doig, Bill Castellon, Jeremy Stevermer, Janet Nelson and Addison Galambos for organizing, curating and producing such an incredible event!

Enjoy these pictures, including a bunch of professional quality photos from Jeremy, a few stories behind some of the trees on display, and a new feature in our newsletter I'm calling *Genus: Genius* where I'm going to interview bonsai geniuses – first up: Michael Hagadorn!

- Adam Kleinberg







## John Doig's San Jose Century Juniper

John Doig's San Jose Juniper tells a powerful story of resilience. This century-old bonsai survived one of America's darkest chapters—the Japanese internment camps of World War II. Its original owner, a Japanese immigrant, carefully nurtured the tree even during his internment, preserving a piece of his heritage.

Seven years ago, John acquired this remarkable tree and collaborated with master bonsai artist Peter Tea to reshape it. Despite the San Jose juniper's notorious complexity—producing both young and mature foliage—John has transformed it into a masterpiece of botanical artistry, with each carefully placed branch telling a story of survival, patience, and hope





## Learning about Suzuki Azaleas with Ron Reed

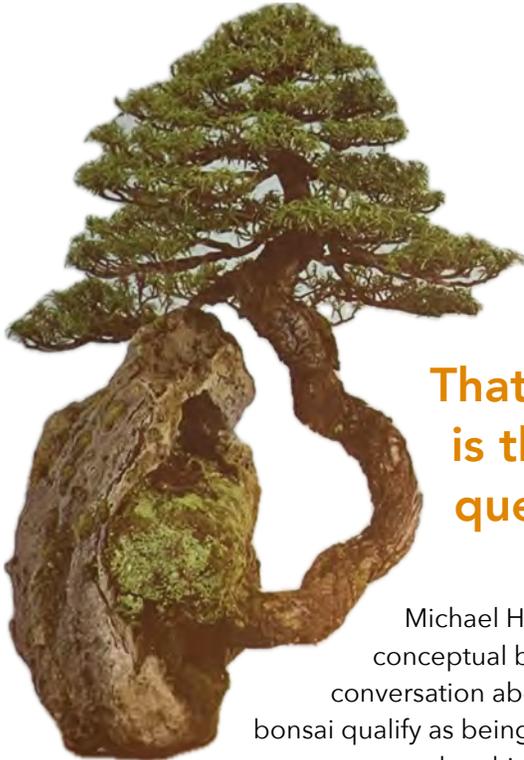
When it comes to azaleas, Ron is The Man. He has over 90 of them in his collection and most are imported from Japan. During the conversation, Adam learned that Ron has a special benizuru tree with light pink flowers, housed in a signed Japanese pot on a Braswell stand. Ron's collection showcases the diversity of azaleas, which are known for their vibrant colors and relatively short but spectacular blooming period. Interestingly, many azalea species originate from East Asia, particularly Japan and China, where they are cultivated not just for gardens but also as significant cultural and ornamental plants. Ron's open house in May would typically feature 20-30 azaleas in full bloom, demonstrating the plant's stunning transformation during its peak flowering season between April and June.

## An innovative display

Nick Vila has only been doing bonsai for a year, but that didn't stop him from designing a truly innovative tokonoma with this bougainvillea bonsai. Not only did he come up with a concept for a beautiful stand, he used Google Maps to take a picture of the street he grew up on and the beautiful overhanging bougainvillea his mother used to love, and then stylized the image using AI and made his own scroll. Mike Hagadorn wrote about this in his review of our club show on his own blog as an example of our club being inclusive of bonsai artists at every level on their journey. Nice work, Nick!



**To be  
Conceptual  
Bonsai or  
not to be?**



**That  
is the  
question.**

Our headliner, presentation on a philosophical makes conceptual conceptual?The horizontally from a rock was that was planted in a vacuum cleaner definitely was. You may recognize Michael's floating tree from last year's Bonsai Expo below. It's dramatic. It's innovative. But is it conceptual? Is the layout of this page conceptual for that matter?

Michael Hagadorn's conceptual bonsai became conversation about what bonsai qualify as being labeled consensus was that this tree emerging not conceptual, but that one famous tree that was planted in a vacuum cleaner definitely was. You may recognize Michael's floating tree from last year's Bonsai Expo below. It's dramatic. It's innovative. But is it conceptual? Is the layout of this page conceptual for that matter?



That is for you to decide.

– by Adam Kleinberg

# Genus: Genius

An interview with Michael Hagadorn



Welcome to the first of a new series in the Tree Shrinker where I'll interview bonsai gurus about their insights and perspectives. Michael Hagadorn was kind enough to carve out some time on Sunday with me to share some wisdom. Here are some highlights from our conversation!

**Q: How would you describe your personal style or approach to bonsai?**

**A:** "I don't really consider myself a conceptual bonsai artist. ... There's only one series of work that I probably haven't finished yet where I explore ideas of vulnerability and fragility, which is kind of, you know, opposed to the bonsai as the stalwart survivor kind of idea. ... I was using ideas of cantilever and things that really couldn't possibly be right, the tree would topple without something holding them down. So that is maybe an avenue of exploration that is unique. But I don't know—other people have to decide that kind of thing."

**Q: What's the value of developing a personal style in bonsai?**

**A:** "My teacher in Japan said ... most of your work is going to be stuff that you do for shows and things like that. It's going to be the usual work. But then also develop your personal style. Your clients might not ask you for that style, but it's important to do it anyway."

**Q: What are some important lessons you try to impart to students, especially those early in their bonsai journey?**

**A:** "The conversation around soil seems to be both personal and important. ... In plant development, I wouldn't use expensive volcanic elements, particles such as Akadama, because there's not as much of an advantage at that phase when you're building elements. It's a better particle for refinement."

**Q: What advice do you have for maintaining healthy trees, especially for intermediates?**

**A:** "In the intermediate phase, that bit really is a big, big law, even in the advanced. ... Preventing problems before they happen, moving your trees around. Micro positioning, I think, is an intermediate level understanding."



## Bonsai Calendar

**Sun - gradually move shaded deciduous trees into sun to promote fall color.**

**Watering** - Water regularly, but don't over-water. Be careful this time of year, because the trees slow down their water consumption and over-watering can cause root rot.

**Fertilizing** - Use low or zero nitrogen fertilizers. Keep fertilizing until about December.

**Styling/Pruning** - This a great month to work on conifers. Renew pinching junipers and severely prune (cut back) one last time this season. It is also the time to do your full wiring and any heavy bending work.

Remove seed pods and dry fruit.

Do not wire deciduous trees until leaves drop.

### **Insect and disease control**

Maintain defensive treatments for fungus. Remove dead plant material. Watch for and treat insect infestations.

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

### **Q: Can you explain micro-positioning and its importance?\***

**A:** "If the plant is telling you a different story, it's like, well, actually, regardless to what the species like, I am a specimen, and I am not happy where I am right now, then moving it until it recovers a little bit. ... That's micro positioning."



### **Q: What's a common mistake you see, even among advanced practitioners?**

**A:** "When we develop skills, we tend to keep gaining more and more trees. ... It's very hard to maintain more than 25 trees at a high level when all you have are weekends to spend on them. ... The quality of our efforts is greatly determined by how many trees we have."

### **Q: What do you think of the EBBS Annual Show and club culture?**

**A:** "It's doing really well with playfulness and with showing. There's a lot of variety, and that is, that's wonderful, yes, really, I think especially for newcomers, that's really inspiring to see higher level trees, so they kind of see where they're going, you know, and then and be allowed to be in the show, you know. ... For a local club, you guys are doing the right thing."



## Club T-Shirts!

Interested in an EBBS shirt? They are now available for purchase at <https://east-bay-bonsai-society.myspreadshop.com/>. Please email Freddie at [fjwinter@yahoo.com](mailto:fjwinter@yahoo.com) with questions.

## Join the conversation!

[facebook.com/groups/ebbs](https://facebook.com/groups/ebbs)

[facebook.com/groups/ebbsmembers](https://facebook.com/groups/ebbsmembers)

[instagram.com/eastbaybonsai/](https://instagram.com/eastbaybonsai/)

[twitter.com/EastBayBonsai](https://twitter.com/EastBayBonsai)

[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

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## Upcoming Bonsai Events

**Midori Bonsai Club 62nd Annual Bonsai Show: Bonsai Style | Trees That Captivate The Eye.** Sat, Oct 04, 2025, 10:00 AM - 5:00 PM, Quinlan Community Center, 10185 N Stelling Rd, Cupertino, CA . Beginner's Workshop, Free Admission, Live Demonstration, Ikebana and Dr. Bonsai.

**10th Anniversary of GSBF Clark Bonsai Collection** Oct 11, 2025, 10:00 AM - 3:00 PM, Clark Bonsai Museum in Shinzen Gardens , 114 W Audubon Dr, Fresno, CA. Come celebrate our ten year anniversary of the Clark Bonsai Collection being one of the three GSBF bonsai collections. Join us for a day of fun, art and community. Live demonstrations with Julian Tsai and Todd Schafer, free tours, activities for the kids. Open to the public.

**GSBF Bonsai Rendezvous 2025** Oct 24 8AM - Oct 26 12:30PM, 13070 CA-33, Santa Nella, CA Biennial GSBF event. Headliners, Suthin Sukosolvisit and Mauro Stemberger will host BYT workshops on Friday. Multiple workshops will be held Friday and Saturday. Vendors all three days. Free educational seminars and BYB hospitality hours. Live and silent auctions.

**Baikoen Bonsai Kenkyukai 61st Winter Silhouettes Exhibition** Jan 17, 2026, 10:00 AM - Jan 18, 2026, 4:30 PM, Los Angeles Arboretum & Botanical Garden, 301 N Baldwin Ave, Arcadia, CA. First bonsai show of the year, trees in their leafless beauty. Pre-bonsai, pots, and tools for sale. Giant raffle/auction and entertainment. Demonstrations both days at 1:00 pm. Nagata-Komai Award Presentation to Cheryl Manning

## STONES FOR SALE

I am putting my Murphy's Stones and Desert Stones that I collected over years FOR SALE... many other stones, suiban, and pots are also available!

Please contact Tony Saraceno via  
TEXT at 1-925-989-3612 for details  
or e-mail  
[amspottery1990@gmail.com](mailto:amspottery1990@gmail.com)

They are best viewed in person but have photos of 2 stones as example. ALL REASONABLE OFFERS CONSIDERED.

