



THE TREE SHRINKER

East Bay Bonsai Society

Next Meeting: **Dec. 13, 2023 at 6:30pm**

President's Message

Happy Holidays everyone! I am so looking forward to our annual dinner on the 13th. I've seen a sneak preview of Michael's Year in Review and what fun we have had this year!



A big thank you to all of our board members and organizers of the events we've held this year. We have really come together as a club and attained success in every category. Our annual auction brought in more monies to our coffers than ever in history, we have grown to a membership of 136 members, held garden tours and multiple workshops and a fabulous show this year!

Also, a special thank you to our board members who are rolling off the board this year: Lisa Harper, Tom Colby, Alise Offeman, Stephen Lysaght, Jeff Behring and Jeremy Stevermer. You will be missed and thank you so much for your dedication, hard work and openness to new ideas.

As we begin the new year your new board is building on the activities of 2023 to provide more opportunity for expanded workshops, tours and field trips to increase your exposure to the world of bonsai.

As always, if you have suggestions or ideas for fun activities, let your board know as we welcome all ideas. A simple note to EBBS_Distribution@yahoo.com or a note in the [Facebook group EBBS Members](#) will go directly to the board.

I'm looking forward to visiting with everyone at the dinner on the 13th. Bring a dish and your appetite and let's have a fun time together!

See you then,

Bev



December Holiday Party!

What a great year 2023 has been! To celebrate our community and our successes as a club, our final meeting of the year will be a holiday dinner where we get to share and remember events of the past year. Michael Hylton is once again gearing up for his special video presentation of our events for 2023 so we can remember everything we did.

We will begin the festivities at 6:30 pm with beverages and appetizers. Note that we start one hour earlier than usual. Doors will open at 6:00 pm and we could use help in setting up for the event.

2023/2024 EBBS Schedule

Regular Meetings:

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

2023

Dec 13 - Holiday Party, at the Garden Center, 6:30pm

2024

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

The club will provide ham, chicken and non-alcoholic beverages. EBBS has purchased a permit for beer and wine for this event and members are free to bring their own to enjoy. The rest is provided by attendees as follows:

Last name A-F Dessert

Last name G-L Appetizer

Last name M-R Salad

Last name S-Z Side dish

The appetizer-people should plan to arrive early so food is available at the beginning of the evening. Please supply an appropriate serving utensil for the dish you are furnishing. Also, be sure to bring your own plate and eating utensils and glass. A decorative place mat would make a festive setting for the meal.

People are also encouraged to bring a small bonsai decorated for the holiday season as table center pieces. This greatly adds to the ambiance of the evening.

November Meeting Recap

Our November meeting was action packed! We began the night with Steven Lysaght running the election of officers and board directors. Congrats to the new officers and board members—who were all unanimously voted into office by those in attendance!

Officers

- **President** – Beverly Martinez (incumbent)
- **Vice President** – Addison Galambos
- **Treasurer** – Pat Cahill (incumbent)

Board of Directors

- Adam Kleinberg (incumbent)
- Tom Fedor (incumbent)
- Michael Jensen-Akula (incumbent)
- Michael Szabo
- Bryan Morgan
- Freddie Winter





Bonsai Calendar

- During the winter most trees are dormant or semi-dormant.
- Take advantage to photograph deciduous trees without leaves.
- Rotate trees at least once a month.
- Review exposure of trees to sun and move or rotate as necessary
- Fertilize deciduous until dormant in winter.
- Water during prolonged dry spells between storms.
- Prop up one end of pots to help drainage during prolonged storms (good advice year-round)
- If you are in an area that doesn't experience freezing temperatures at night, you can start repotting trees. Start with strong healthy deciduous trees first then move on to your conifers. If the tree is weak don't take any chances and repot closer to Spring!

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



Pygmy Cypress with Bob Shimon

We also had a really interesting demonstration from Bob Simon of Mendocino Coast Bonsai about a really interesting tree—the pygmy cypress. Congrats to Karl Yetter who recently rejoined the club after taking a break for a while on winning the demo tree—and welcome back!

Bob sent this article he wrote some years ago, so we're including it here! Thanks. Bob!

*I guess Zack and I are best known for our collected redwoods. However, I've been collecting the Mendocino Pygmy Cypress (*Cupressus Pigmae*) the past 35 years, and like the redwoods, there has not been anything written about them as bonsai material. Therefore, working with the pygmy cypress and redwood have been similar in that it has been a learn as you go experience for me. They grow several miles inland, in small areas along the Mendocino coast. They are stunted due to the poor, acidic, nutrient starved soil conditions in these areas. These conditions create a shallow root system. The foliage is*

Living Sculptures

The Art & Science of Bonsai at Sonoma Botanical Garden

This January to March, experience a world of serene beauty and intricate craftsmanship as Sonoma Botanical Garden partners with Redwood Empire Bonsai Society to present Living Sculptures: The Art and Science of Bonsai. More than 15 magnificent bonsai will be on view, meticulously nurtured and shaped by local artisans. Take in a fusion of modern and classic forms, from graceful uprights to dramatic windswept styles - each a testament to the patience, dedication and creativity involved in the contemplative art form. Then stroll the Garden's paths to see some of the full-sized species showcased in the exhibit. Winter is also the perfect time to catch the magic of the Garden's Magnolias in bloom!

For info on the exhibit and an array of related demonstrations and special tours, visit www.sonomabg.org.

like shimpaku juniper and have a citrus smell when rubbed.

The pygmy cypress has had a reputation as being a difficult tree to grow, due in part to the wrong information that was being shared. When I first started collecting them, I was advised to remove the original soil, since it was so poor. That turned out to be the exact opposite of what needed to be done, and the early ones all died quickly.

Having a shallow root system, we capture all of the roots in the original soil and plant them that way with some sandy soil around the outside. After the first year, you can remove around a third of the original soil around the perimeter and bottom and replace it with bonsai soil (2 parts akadama, and one part each of pumice and lava rock). You can wire and pinch as you would a juniper. Remove around another third of the soil and replace with bonsai mix both the second and third years and continue styling the tree. I always leave a little of the original soil around the base. I have several of the trees for nearly 20 years now with some of the original soil still around the base. By the fourth year, they can be repotted into a bonsai pot without any problems, and the branches and foliage will be well developed.

We normally collect and repot early February where we live here on the Mendocino coast. They respond well to a monthly feeding of a balanced fertilizer, with not high numbers, such as 5-5-5 during the growing season and 0-10-10 during the winter months. They can tolerate warm weather but need to be protected if the temperature drops into the mid twenties for extended periods.

Bunjin Pine Workshop with Bill Castellon

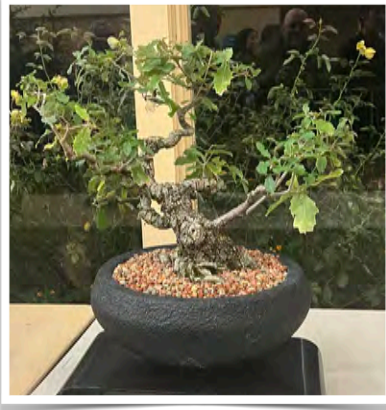
Bill Castellon led a Bring-Your-Own Bunjin Black Pine workshop this month at the Bonsai Garden at Lake Merritt. Bill is an expert in Black Pines and has shown his work for many years. Eight of our members were able to participate and learn from Bill's expertise on pines.

Big thanks to Bill for providing this one-of-a-kind opportunity to EBBS! We're fortunate to have such knowledgeable members in our club!



Show and Tell

We also had a lot of Show and Tellers this month! Some of the highlights were:



- Jeremy Stevermer showed an orange honeysuckle suiseki, accented, of course, with Lego!
- Stephen Lysaght showed an unusual and interesting Madagascar ficus tree and an oak designed by Larry Schrader, who Janet recently honored with an article about in a recent *Tree Shrinker*.
- Alise Offeman showed a club-owned crabapple that's been thriving under her care!
- Bob Gould showed a lovely Japanese Zelkova, and his own excellent pygmy cypress.
- Lisa Harper also showed a great pygmy cypress and gave us insight into their development potential – the trunk doubled in just 3-4 years!
- Antonio Salcedo also shared a beautiful cypress from his collection.



Meet the Member: Tom Colby

Welcome to the East Bay Bonsai Society's (EBBS) newest feature, "Meet the Member." In our first edition, we're excited to showcase Tom Colby, a distinguished member who has greatly influenced not only our club, but the world of bonsai, particularly through his exceptional bonsai stands.

Tom's journey into bonsai began with a modest gift from his son—a small, yet charming bonsai tree. This gift resonated with his long-standing passion for plants, as he already nurtured a greenhouse full of orchids. Tom's bonsai adventure further blossomed when he encountered a fellow enthusiast while walking his dog. This



serendipitous meeting near a beautifully crafted Japanese garden led to an exchange about bonsai and stands. "I noticed 'Hey, they're in Bonsai pots,' and that got me talking with him," Tom recalls.

This encounter inspired Tom to blend his woodworking skills with his love for bonsai, leading to the creation of high-quality stands. His endeavor in stand-making started at the Mammoth Bazaar in 2008. Tom credits this to his dog, noting, "if I didn't



walk the dog, I'd never have known this guy."

Joining the local bonsai club, Yamato, was a significant milestone. It provided him with foundational knowledge in bonsai care. "Yamato was a 'sensei club,' run by one person. You begin to get some sense of what he likes to do, what he presents, and how he goes about tackling a bonsai," Tom explains. However, seeking a broader perspective, he joined EBBS, appreciating its variety of monthly presenters.

Tom's role in the club expanded when he took over writing the newsletter after the departure of a professional technical writer.

His seven-year tenure as the newsletter author was pivotal, forcing him to delve deeper into the bonsai world. "Every month, I felt a pressure to say something smart about bonsai," he reflects. *(Note, the current editor of this newsletter now feels pressure to say something smart about bonsai!)*

Tom's commitment to bonsai extends beyond his personal enjoyment to nurturing the bonsai



community. He expresses, "It's a commitment to give back." His participation in Kathy Shaner's workshops was particularly influential. He learned a unique style of bonsai cultivation, focusing on selective wiring and the use of guide wires.

Prior to his bonsai business, Tom was a chemist for Shell Oil, which influenced his pragmatic approach to plant care. "I worked with some really nasty stuff. So when I see a bug on my tree, I just spray the hell out of it," he candidly shares.

Tom's collection is vast, including bonsai trees, cacti, a greenhouse full of orchids, suiseki rocks, and Indonesian masks. He is especially proud of his Manzanita bonsai trees, overcoming the challenge that they're difficult to grow as bonsai. "They are very shy rooters, but if you start with trees in a gallon can, they do fine," he advises.

Tom's story is not just about bonsai; it's about the connections made and lessons learned along the way. His journey is a testament to how a simple gift and a love for plants can evolve into a lifelong passion, deeply embedding one in the intricate world of bonsai.





Upcoming Bonsai Events

Mammoth Auction Clean-up, Dec. 16, 9am-1pm at the Bonsai Garden. Come volunteer and clean up some trees!

Bay Area Bonsai Associates (BABA) Show - Jan 13, 5-9pm with demo by Bill Castellon at 6:30pm and Jan 14 10-4pm. Lakeside Park Garden Center, 666 Bellevue Ave, Oakland, CA 94610. Sales, raffle and refreshments.

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.

The Mammoth Auction & Sale - Feb 18-19, 9am - 3pm, Lakeside Park Garden Center , 666 Bellevue Ave, Oakland, CA 94610 – All proceeds support the GSBF Bonsai Garden at Lake Merritt. Live auction on Saturday with preview at 12pm and auction at 1pm, Vendors on Sunday, February 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. Point of contact is George Haas, Mammoth Chair, at gwhaas@comcast.net. All auction items must be received by January 6th in order to be photographed and included in the auction catalog.

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.

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HAPPY HOLIDAYS!