



THE TREE SHRINKER

Next East Bay Bonsai Society Meeting: **August 13, 2025**

2025 EBBS Schedule

Regular Meetings

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

Aug 13 - Jonas Dupuich, Tree Display

Aug 17 - *Intro to Bonsai* at The Garden with Michael Jensen-Akula

Sep 10 - Pre-Show Workshop 7:30pm

Sept 19 - Set-up for Annual Show

Sept 20 & 21 - EBBS Annual Show

NOTE: the show is being held in Sept instead of October this year.

Sept 28 - *Intro to Bonsai* at The Garden with Janet Nelson

Oct 8 - Bill Castellon, Pines

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

Nov 12 - Eric Schrader

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

* at the Bonsai Garden workshop

We'll have an informal, pre-show workshop during the regular Sept. meeting time (9/10 at 7:30) to swap stands, accent plants, scrolls, and do any last minute tree work.

Volunteer for our Show!

Help out with the EBBS show!

[Sign up here](#)



August Meeting:

Tree Display with Jonas Dupuich

Have you wondered what it takes to get your bonsai trees "show ready"? We are delighted to feature Jonas Dupuich to our August 13th meeting to speak to us on tree display. Jonas has asked for member trees to be used in his lecture, and we hope to have many for him to choose from. Bring a tree, a stand and an accent plant to the meeting and it may be chosen by Jonas during this demonstration. See you then. Pre-Meeting Workshop at 6:30pm

We'll be having another pre-meeting workshop at our August 13th meeting. The workshop is open to all and is free. It will be from 6:30-7:30 pm in the meeting room. Please bring material to work on together with everyone around you! Experienced members will be there to provide guidance. If you're wondering what to bring, August is a great time for second pruning on deciduous or a good time to wire and style trees.

Thanks in advance to Jessica Phrogus, Ed Smyth and Jason Coon for bringing refreshments to our August meeting!

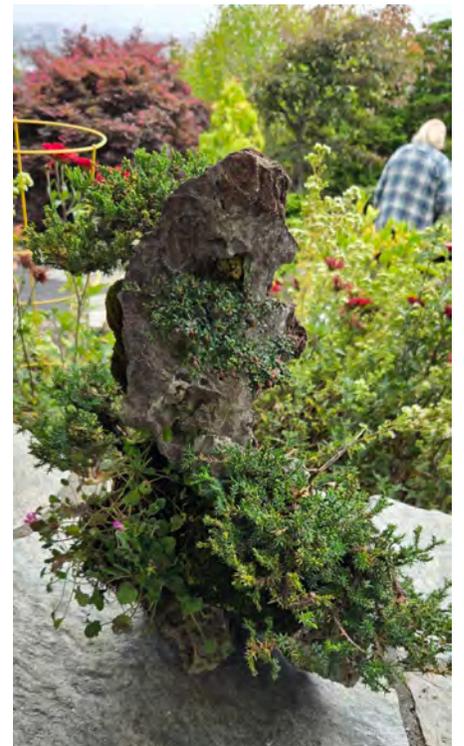


Annual Club Picnic

We had a wonderful turnout in July for the annual potluck picnic. The day started out with a tour led by Michael Jensen-Akula of his and Marilyn's beautiful garden. Then we dove into a wonderful feast provided by the guests. Finally, each person who brought a tree told us the story about their bonsai. It was good to get together for a relaxing afternoon. As it was a bit chilly, we will strive to pick an August date next year. Here are just a few of the pictures.

More on the next page!







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!

Peter Tea has a great post on his blog about decandling. It's [worth a read](#).

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.

Defoliation 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.

Accent Plants for Bonsai Display

(In Japanese “Shitakusa” which means the small undergrowth)

Bonsai are typically displayed in a show with an accent. This accent could be a small suiseki stone, a small figure, or most often an accent plant. Why is there an accent?

In this article, I outline general guidelines gleaned from talks with Polly Gould, Young Choe, Jonas Dupuich, and by studying Japanese show books and YouTube videos from the Kokofuten shows, the Japanese book, “Katayama School of Keido, the Original school of Japanese Traditional Display Arrangements” by Katayama Ichiu, and David DeGroot’s book, “Principles of Bonsai Design” (which has a large chapter on bonsai display, including show design display). Keep in mind, I am not an expert and these are only my conclusions from study.



My personal interpretation of these resources allows me to offer this reason why we use accents in bonsai display. Accents can convey time of year or location, tell a story, or simply provide additional visual interest. We can also use the “Art of Bonsai Display” to elevate our trees to a higher art to tell a story or even to evoke an emotion. For example, we can strive to suggest a story of the tree’s history and hardship, or to set a mood of a lovely summer picnic underneath a California coastal redwood.

The “story” of your tree can be specific or vague. The bonsai tree is always the dominant subject of your display. The eye should go to the bonsai first. The accent should be humble, secondary and should harmonize with the bonsai—not fight with it for attention. Some guidelines to achieve this especially with accent plants are below, but like other “rules” in the art of bonsai, these are general guidelines, not set in stone.



重要盆栽 Important Bonsai Masterpiece

Use the accent to contribute to the story of the tree by suggesting the season (of the show) or the bonsai's natural habitat

- The accent is most often used to suggest or accentuate the season of the show, and/or the natural habitat of where the bonsai tree grows in the wild.
- An ideal accent plant would contain plants that grow normally in the wild under the bonsai tree species you are showing. If the accent plant grows in the wild with the native bonsai tree, the accent will always be in the right season year-round. Here is an example of plants that grow with Sierra junipers from Jonas Dupuich: <https://bonsaitonight.com/2019/06/25/sierra-wildflowers-natures-accent-plants/>
- Here is another example from iNaturalist of what grows in our native California coastal redwood forests: <https://www.inaturalist.org/guides/5143>
- For junipers and pines, which do not show strong seasonality themselves, a seasonally relevant accent can be important. For example, accent plants that turn red in fall would work well with evergreen conifers shown in fall.
- In general, avoid accent plants from vastly different habitats than your bonsai. For example, tropical plants are not usually appropriate with non-tropical trees.

Contrasting the accent with the bonsai helps to express the tree's story:

- The pot of the bonsai and the accent should contrast in both shape and glaze. A bonsai in a rectangular unglazed pot could be paired with a round or oval glazed accent pot. The accent and bonsai pots should not be the same color or shape. However, the accent pot can be a similar level of artisan skill or value as the bonsai pot.

- If the bonsai is in flower, the accent should not be in flower. If the bonsai is not in flower, the accent plant can be (if in the right season), but doesn't have to be.
- The foliage of the bonsai should contrast with the foliage of the accent in both color and form. For example, pine bonsai could have a broad leaf accent plant such as a red oxalis. A grass accent may not work with a pine bonsai if the shape of the leaves is very similar.



Stands:

- All bonsai trees and accent plants are displayed on a stand. The stand for the accent is less formal and less tall than the stand of the primary bonsai. Most often, accent plants are displayed on a wooden slab (or jita in Japanese). The color and texture of the bonsai and accent stands should contrast, rather than match, with the bonsai stand being the "stronger" or more dominant color and texture.



Placement of accent relative to bonsai:

- The bonsai and accent should lean towards each other, or towards the viewer.
- The accent plant should be placed in the spot where an imaginary line drawn from the bonsai crown would hit the table top. You can use your arm or a straight edge to estimate placement.
- The accent plant should be forward of the bonsai.

General appearance of the accent:

- Accent plants should convey great age, like the bonsai. Some accent plants are many years old. However, accent plants can be made shortly before the show if care is taken to make them look old.
- Accent plants can contain a single species, or a few different species, generally an odd number.
- The plants should completely fill the pot, this contributes to the appearance of age.
- No soils should show. If soil is visible, it can be covered with live moss (rather than top dressing). Any kind of moss can be a feature of the accent. Imagine the tree in nature- moss is often on the shady ground in many habitats.



Relative heights of bonsai and accent:

For this section, I roughly measured the relative heights of trees and accents in the 96 Kokofu-ten show book, Kokofu-ten YouTube videos, and images in David De Groot's Principles of bonsai design.

- The height of the accent, including its stand, should in general not exceed the height of the top of the bonsai display stand (or, the bottom of the bonsai pot). For cascade bonsai, the accent is much shorter than the top of the cascade stand.
- For three point displays, the secondary bonsai including stand is almost always about the height of the top of the primary bonsai's stand. The accent plant (the third point in three point displays) is not taller than the top of the secondary bonsai pot. These accents are very tiny.
- For two point display, the accent plant is a little bit larger than an accent in the three point display, but not as big as the secondary bonsai in a three point display. Accents in a two point display are never taller than the height of the primary bonsai stand and is usually shorter, giving it a very small relative appearance.
- In general, the overall height of the accent (including flowers or stalks) is never taller than one third of the height of the bonsai and its stand. Usually, the accent with its stand is 1/4 to 1/6 the height of the bonsai with its stand.
- If suiseki are used in place of an accent plant, they are even smaller than the accent plant would be.

– written by Lisa Harper



It's SHOWTIME!!!

It's the best time of the year - EBBS Showtime! The camaraderie of working together with other club members for the show is exhilarating. We encourage every single member to show a bonsai tree, even you very new members. If you have any questions, please don't hesitate to call or email Show Chair Michael Szabo.

Preparing Your Tree for Display

Every member is encouraged to bring a bonsai tree to display. Your tree doesn't have to be a show-stopper, but it must meet these basic requirements:

- **Clean bonsai pot** - not a nursery or training pot. Clean with a lightly oiled rag using walnut oil, mineral oil, or any odorless type.
- **Tree maintenance** - free of weeds, pests, and pesticide smell. Remove damaged leaves. Trees may be neatly wired.
- **Soil presentation** - prepare the top with live moss or new soil/small gravel in colors that work with the tree and pot.
- **Stand required** - all trees and accents should be on a stand or jita. Contact Lisa Harper to borrow one, and put felt pads on your pot's feet to prevent scratches.
- **Labeling** - put your name and contact info on the bottom of plants and stands.

For display ideas and Japanese aesthetic, see Kokofu-ten show photos and search "display" and "show" at <https://bonsaitonight.com/recent/>. For stand guidance: <https://bonsaitonight.com/2022/09/17/bonsai-stand-conventions/>

Show Labels: Bev Martinez will send out a request for your tree details.

Show Weekend Schedule

Friday Setup (Sept 19): All volunteers and tree displayers arrive at the Garden Center. Volunteers set up tables and backdrops while others bring show trees to the hallway. Pizza dinner provided! People can bring in items Friday night, Saturday all day and Sunday all day.

Curators: Suzanne Muller and Tom Colby will place all general show trees. Jancie Dilbeck handles Tokonoma displays. John Doig, Bill Castellon, and Janet Nelson organize Shohin/Mame displays.

Saturday & Sunday: Lunch provided for all volunteers.

Sunday Breakdown (4pm): Show ends, doors close to public. We need everyone's help to clean up by 5pm:

- Remove your trees, accents & belongings first
- Help pack up table clothes and backdrops
- Put away tables and chairs
- Clean kitchen and remove leftover food
- Sweep debris

Sign-Ups & Participation

Volunteers: Sign up at [this link](#) or email Mike Szabo at michael@cheezywhiz.com. This is your show and will only be as good as we collectively make it.

Tokonoma: Contact Janice Dilbeck at (925) 698-0627 or janicedilbeck@comcast.net.

Workshops: Three workshops available for club members. Sign-up information coming soon.

Club Sale

The sale helps fund the show and introduces newcomers to bonsai. Items may be donated (100% to club) or consigned (20% to club, 80% to seller). Make items attractive by removing weeds, dead leaves, and trimming awkward branches.

Sale details: Complete inventory forms and tag each item with selling price or mark as donation. Bring items Friday evening, Saturday, or Sunday. EBBS volunteers get early access Saturday at 9am before public opening at 10am.

Inventory forms and tags are attached to the newsletter email and will be available at the meeting on Wednesday.



What if a single stone could hold a mountain, a memory, or a glimpse of the universe itself?

Suiseki Stories is a unique and deeply personal collection of reflections from artists, collectors, and contemplatives from all over the world who have been shaped by the quiet beauty of *suiseki*—the Japanese art of viewing stones that evoke natural scenes or forms.

It is an art form both humble and profound—one in which a stone can suggest not only a landscape or a living being, but also evoke a world beyond the visible, inviting moments of deep stillness, imagination, and connection.

In this book, we do not aim to define *suiseki* for the world—nor could we. We recognize that *suiseki*, born of Japanese aesthetics, holds meanings and subtleties that are not universally agreed upon or easily understood outside its native context. Instead, *Suiseki Stories* offers something simpler and perhaps more powerful: a chorus of individual voices, each sharing their own experience of stones that moved them, changed them, or called them to reflect more deeply on life.

With 195 pages of striking photographs and intimate stories from across the globe, *Suiseki Stories* reveals how this ancient practice lives today—not as a fixed tradition, but as a personal and evolving journey.

Ideal for:

- *Suiseki*, stone appreciation, and bonsai enthusiasts
- Lovers of Japanese aesthetics, *wabi-sabi*, and contemplative arts
- Readers drawn to the intersection of nature, memory, and meaning
- Anyone who has ever found wonder in an ordinary stone

Let these stories inspire your own!

To purchase the hardcover edition of the book, click [here](#) Or use the QR code below

To purchase the digital edition of the book contact Sam Edge at: suisekistories@gmail.com

The digital PDF version of the book is US \$24.95. The printed book is available for US \$59.99 or an equivalency in other currencies.



- submitted by Janet Roth

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 with questions.

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.

Newsletter Contributors

Editor: Adam Kleinberg

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Last month's article on "A Chemistry Lesson" was written by Tom Colby.

Photography: Adam Kleinberg, Bev Martinez, De Groot (Principles of Bonsai display)

Upcoming Bonsai Events

John Y. Naka Memorial Bonsai Exhibition, Aug 16, 2025, 10:00 AM – Aug 17, 2025, 5:00 PM, Japanese American Community Cultural Ctr, 244 San Pedro St #505, Los Angeles, CA, The Nisei Week celebration of Japanese culture will occur over two weekends in August. The Naka Memorial Bonsai Exhibition features about 30 masterpiece bonsai displayed in art gallery style, with individual trees set around a large white room in a formal setting utilizing stands and accents.

Redwood Empire Bonsai Society (REBS) Bonsai Show Aug 23- 24, 10am-4pm. Rohnert Park Community Center, 5401 Snyder Ln, Rohnert Park, CA. Featuring Mike Pistello, Bonsai artist and instructor, winner of the Joshua Roth Rising Stars Competition at GSBF Bonsai Rendezvous 2023

East Bay Bonsai Society Annual Show and Sale!, Sep 20, 2025, 10:00 AM – Sep 21, 2025, 4:00 PM, Lakeside Garden Center, 666 Bellevue Ave, Oakland, CA, We're excited to invite you to the East Bay Annual Show and Sale! We'll have a shot of vendors and club sales this year as well as an amazing headliner, Michael Hagedorn! Come join us in Oakland and see some amazing trees.

American Bonsai Assoc. Sacramento Live Auction & Consignment Sale, Sep 20, 2025, 1:00 PM – 4:00 PM, 3330 McKinley Blvd, Sacramento, CA, Whether you're a seasoned enthusiast or new to bonsai, our meeting space will be packed with incredible items for sale on Saturday, September 20. Don't miss your chance to find something special for your collection! Free entry - All are welcome! Preview 1:00; Live Auction 1:30

61st Annual Akebono Bonsai Club, Sep 20, 2025, 10:00 AM – 4:00 PM, Palo Alto, 2751 Louis Rd, Palo Alto, CA, Come join us for our 61st Annual Bonsai Show held in conjunction with the Palo Alto Buddhist Temple Car Show. Enjoy viewing bonsai in this unique outdoor setting. We will also have bonsai sales and a demonstration. Food available to purchase at the car show and admission is free.

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.

GSBF Bonsai Rendezvous 2025 Oct 24-26, 9:00am - 1:00pm, Santa Nella, 13070 CA-33, Santa Nella, 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.