



Bonsai Wire

Marin Bonsai Club

Monthly Meeting
3rd Tuesday, 7:30PM
Marin Art & Garden Center
30 Sir Francis Drake Blvd. Ross, CA

February 2009

Jay McDonald once told me that the art of bonsai acquisition was one of the most important to a bonsai enthusiast - at least one without unlimited funds for purchases. Anyone who has spent time around Jay will have heard the stories about how he acquired trees that had the potential to be fabulous bonsai for very little monetary lay out. Although not many of us have Jay's gift (?) of persuasion, I have learned quite a bit from watching his dogged pursuit of fine bonsai material and thought I would pass some tips along. These are just my ideas, gleaned from Jay, Tim Kong, Kathy Shaner and many fine bonsai teachers I have been exposed to over the years. This is not a definitive list, but a starting point so if you are interested in expanding or improving you bonsai collection please read on.

Prepare yourself for the deal of the century:

- 1) What trees do you really like, will hold your interest for years and grow well in the space you have available for them? **Focus** on these trees and don't let yourself get distracted by some exotic beauty you won't be able to keep alive in the blast furnace that is your backyard.
- 2) Can you tell a tree with promise from one that will take more time and effort than it will ever be worth? This isn't easy and it takes much **practice** to train your eye to 'see the tree' hiding in the shrub. The practice is available at our monthly workshops where you can get pointers not only on your trees, but see the trees of others, hear our teachers comment about their potential and methods for improving the shape. Go to as many bonsai shows as you can as well as the Collection North to **study trees**. Talk to the owners about them, ask questions. Read the **bonsai magazines** - our lovely

club Librarian Tim Burke would be happy to check them out to you. Be prepared to make a quick decision when the opportunity presents itself.

- 3) Be realistic about how many trees you can take care of well. Trees aren't orphans and they don't need you to take them home. Concentrate on buying **a few really great trees** for your collection rather than many smaller ones. Inevitably you will be happier with better quality material to work on and higher quality pots to put your trees in.
- 4) Looking for pots for your trees? Armed with Valerie Monroe's great advice on selecting pots for your trees (October 2008 meeting), the next step is to **measure the pot** that your tree is currently in. Note your thoughts on changing the size or shape, the color you deem best for the tree and ideas on the dream pot you are looking for. Take this information with you shopping and don't get distracted by a pretty glaze or delicate cloud feet that just aren't appropriate for your trees. Pots can be as alluring as trees to some people and while having more than enough pots isn't as big a liability as too many trees, theoretically you have limited funds and again you want to **focus**.

Now that you are mentally prepared, here is where you will find the best trees and pots:

- Bonsai **exhibitions** around the Bay Area. There are usually member sale areas.
- The **Mammoth Bonsai Auction and Sale** at Lake Merritt the last weekend of February. Great trees, pots and suiseki at both events. A good cause too. Proceeds go to help maintain the beautiful Collection North Bonsai Garden.

- Estate sales. These come up periodically and some times on short notice. If you want to know about these events please make sure we have your **email address** so we can quickly get in touch to let you know about an opportunity for acquisition.

- Marin Bonsai's own **member sales** at monthly workshops and meetings. (New starting in February!) Our **auction** in August is another great place to find good material.

- Collecting trips. These come up more irregularly, but if you have an interest make it known and we will try to get a **collecting trip** together.

- There is no harm in **asking**, politely, if someone is interested in selling their trees, or maybe just letting them know that you would be interested in case they suddenly lost their mind and wanted to divest themselves of their prized Japanese Black Pine. Then stay in touch. Notice I didn't say be a pest.

- Keep your **ears open** and be **diligent** about following up leads on people who are culling their collections, moving or in need of cash. Sad but true, some people do need to liquidate assets these days and that might include bonsai trees.

- Last tip from the master acquisitionor; **cash** talks. You could catch someone in a moment of weakness if you pull a roll of the green stuff out of your pocket at just the right moment (and I don't mean moss!)

However you find them, enjoy your trees, bring them to the monthly workshops for advice on styling and to show off and when the time is right let us know when the sale is. We'll all be there early with cash in hand!!

- An Anonymous Past President

Welcome to our newest members!

Ian Shapiro - San Francisco
Daniel Keller - San Rafael

January Meeting

The January meeting was a great way to start off the new pruning season. It was Pruning/Styling 101 for me, and a great checklist experience for the seasoned bonsai enthusiasts. Valerie Monroe, member of Sei Boku Bonsai Kai of San Mateo, led us through the steps of evaluating our material for a successful development of a new specimen (in this case a procumbens juniper).

Valerie demonstrated this by:

- Removing dead wood and looking for crotch growth to where we could cut off the excess tip green material yet leaving enough growing parts for the branchlets of the plant to recover. We could then see the base roots (nebari) and the main branches. Valerie emphasized checking for the 'line of the tree', which is the 'essence of the tree' and is as important as the nebari, if not more. Tilting the tree in other directions may help you see the 'essence' better.



Valerie Monroe demonstrates her technique at the January meeting.

- Valerie decided which was the 'front' or the 'viewing side' of the tree. Being experienced, before the demo she had made drawings of the tree showing the options that could be made, while the inexperienced would have made drawings now that more of the outer growth had been cut away. Allowing the group to make the decision but giving all the reasons why she was progressing toward the first option, she removed the undesirable branches yet allowing enough branch growth for the tree to recover and encourage growth in areas that needed to

be filled. One of the problems encountered was a 'pigeon breast' appearance of the main trunk and the twisting back of the leader which Valerie solved by placing the leader into a more pleasing placement.

- With the dexterity and strength of her seasoned hands, Valerie wired the tree into the position that she desired the tree to grow. Even with these early cuts that were made, it made a considerable change in the look of the tree with great possibilities of an interesting bonsai in the near future.



Tim Burke was the lucky raffle winner of the procumbens juniper styled by Valerie Monroe at the January meeting.

Valerie's revelation has shown us that we can turn a 'good' tree into an exciting 'showable' tree. Her wiring techniques have 'piqued' many of us to ask for a 'wiring' workshop in the near future since many of us were unable to attend the last one by Marco.

I never seem to come away from a demonstration without learning a few more tricks-of-the-trade. So we hope to see you at our next meeting and demo.

- Emily Shibata

Need more bonsai news (with color pictures and no paper cuts)? The REBS newsletter is now available online at www.rebsbonsai.org.

Hopefully, Marin Bonsai Club will be following suit in the not too distant future. Think of all the trees we would save. Better that those trees are chopped up and squished into small pots.



A librarian never forgets...

Growing up in Marin the 1970's offered us many public services throughout the years, from shooting baskets at the Fairfax gym to skinny-dipping in Phoenix Lake (sensei). The one service I did take advantage of is the public library. San Anselmo had Mrs. Shine. She was as sweet as can be but a memory like an elephant. I'd run into her at Jack's grocery store and she'd ask about the family, schoolwork and that book I took out two years earlier...how did she do it? Well friends, I'm sorry to say it comes with the title, librarian. Want to increase your memory? Volunteer at the library. So to tie up this intriguing tale of lust and betrayal, RETURN YOUR LIBRARY BOOKS!! I KNOW WHO YOU ARE!!

Short cuts from the board...

The new year is upon us and with that the inevitable change occurs, new president in the white house and no president in the club house. Well we do what we can. A new arrival at our meetings and workshops will be, drum roll please, ratta tat tatta, ***your trees!***

That's right. In an effort to promote new interest in the club, trees are a must, so, we encourage everyone to sell their unwanted, overgrown, future gems and current masterpieces at the workshops and demo's...look for our librarian to set up a sales table in the back of the room. The club will receive 20% or \$50.00, whichever is less, as a service tax.

Tell your friends, remind other members, bring the wife, bring the kids, bring the whole everybody. If they don't have a tree to work on, there will be some available through the club...yahtzee!

- Tim Burke

BAY AREA BONSAI EVENTS

February 28-March 1 **Oakland, CA**
GSBF Bonsai Garden at Lake Merritt: 18th Annual Mammoth Fundraiser at the Lakeside Garden Center, 666 Bellevue Avenue. Saturday (Feb 28) Auction 1PM-4PM with preview 12Noon-1PM. Sunday (Mar 1) Mammoth Fundraiser 10AM-5PM. Demonstration and critiques by Kathy Shaner, Curator. Vendors, benefit drawings, raffles and large consignment sale of bonsai and bonsai related items.

March 29 **Scotts Valley, CA**
Santa Cruz Bonsai Kai: 20th Annual Bonsai Show at the Scotts Valley Community Center, 360 King's Village Road, Hours are 10:30AM-4:30PM. Demonstration at 1:30PM by Katsumi Kinoshita. Plant sales, door prizes, raffle of the demonstration tree and much more.

April 4-5 **Sacramento, CA**
Bonsai Sekiyu Kai: 32nd Annual Bonsai Show at the Sacramento Betsuin Buddhist Church, 2401 Riverside Boulevard, Saturday, 12:00PM to 5:00PM, and Sunday, 10:00AM to 3:30PM. Demonstrations both days at 2:00PM by Bonsai Master John Uchida. Refreshments, door prizes, raffles, plants and bonsai tool sales. Ron Krause (916) 481-4792.

April 18-19 **Palo Alto, CA**
Kusamura Bonsai Club: 49th Annual Bonsai Show and Sale at the Mitchell Park Community Center, 3800 Middlefield Road. Show hours are Saturday, 12Noon-5PM and Sunday, 10AM-5PM. Featured guest (TBA). Bonsai plant sale, and a show of both established and educational work in progress trees.

April 25-26 **Eureka, CA**
Humboldt Bonsai Society: Annual show in conjunction with the American Rhododendron Society at Saint Bernard Elementary School, 115 Henderson. Hours are 10AM- 4 PM. Demonstrations and benefit drawings both days. Free admission. Contact information, Bill Hegy, 707-499-3459.

April 26 **Watsonville, CA**
Watsonville Bonsai Club: 35th Annual Bonsai Show at the Watsonville Buddhist Temple, 423 Bridge Street. Show hours are 10AM-4PM. Demonstration at 2PM by Katsumi Kinoshita of Monterey. Plenty of parking for group attendance. Raffle and plant sales. For more information call Don White 831-724-9283, or Iwao Yamashita 831-724-5332.

May 16-17 **Hanford, CA**
The Clark Center for Japanese Art and Culture presents its annual Spring Festival Saturday, May 16 10am to 5pm. A full day of bonsai art, tea presentations, garden tours, lecture/seminars, art sales bazaar and food.

Above is in conjunction with the KAZARI Bonsai Display Competition held May 16 (10am-5pm) and May 17 (10am-3pm). This is a national competition on the art of displaying bonsai in a tokonoma alcove.

Admission to the Spring Festival and KAZARI is \$5 per person for non-members in advance, \$7 at the door. For further information, contact Clark Center at bonsai@ccjac.org. 15770 Tenth Avenue, Hanford, CA. Phone 559-582-4915. www.ccjac.org

Time to pay your dues

If you haven't already paid your membership fee, you can mail it in or bring it with you to the next workshop or meeting. You've got to pay to play!

Possible Peter Adams workshops on the dates below. Location and cost to be determined depending on demand. Great opportunity to study with a world-renowned bonsai teacher. Small class size. Sign up sheet at next workshop/meeting or call John Doig to reserve space in Peter's class.

March 7/8
May 16/17
September 19/20

(Most likely we would do the workshop on the Saturday of that weekend unless there was enough demand for a Sunday class)

Marlene Philley has graciously volunteered to be our new Hospitality person. Thank you Marlene and thank you Peggy for all your time and effort!

Looking for members with special skills for special projects:

Anyone with a skill or interest in graphic design and/or photography who would like to help with a couple of projects for the club please contact Candace. Your talents will be put to work for a worthy cause.

10th Annual Bay Island Bonsai Exhibit

At the recent exhibit in Hayward, a few members of the Marin Bonsai Club were invited along with other bonsai club presidents, VP's, and newsletter editors for a special showing by Boon Manakitivipart. (See - this is the kind of thing you're missing by not being president.) After the exhibits closed on Saturday, January 17, two groups of twenty or so were let back in to the exhibit hall. We alternated between being wined and dined (tasty appetizers) by BIB members and accompanying Boon as he critiqued a small sampling of the more than 75 trees in the exhibit. He compared the trees as they are now to their state in previous years' exhibits. We each received a booklet with photographs of those and other trees from the 2000-2004 exhibits. It was amazing to see how much even mature 'finished' bonsai can change in the matter of a few years.

There were probably just as many trees available at the auction. No sticks in pots here -high quality bonsai trees - prices with commas in them! Beautiful Japanese Black Pines, Japanese White Pines, Japanese Maples, Trident Maples, California Junipers, Sierra Junipers, Chinese Junipers and more. There was a separate vendor area for sales of pots, tools, trees, etc. Boon's first repotting techniques DVD was playing (and available for sale) while we browsed the wares.

I wasn't able to make it back for Sunday's activities so I missed Boon's styling of a Western Juniper. There was also a silent auction that I would have liked to have been there for. Next year, for sure!

10% Discount at Sunnyside Nursery!

This is a reminder of the ongoing offer for 2009 from Sunnyside. There is a ten percent discount on anything in the nursery for members showing their Marin Bonsai Club pin. Be sure to stop in and check out their selection of bonsai tools and trees (and regular plants too!). 130 Sir Francis Drake Blvd, San Anselmo, CA. Phone: 415-453-2701. www.sunnysideofmarin.com. Hours: 8:30am-5:30pm M-F, 8:30am-5pm Sat-Sun

The annual **Marin Club weeding day** at Collection North (now known as GSBF Bonsai Garden at Lake Merritt) will be on Saturday 2/21 to help clean up the garden before the Mammoth Fundraiser on 2/28 & 3/1. Please call Michaele at 945-9930 if you are interested. The sign up sheet will be out at the repotting workshops 2/3 and 2/17.

The Marin Bonsai Club will be offering a 2 night **advanced beginner workshop** on March 18 & 25 (Thursdays) 6:30-9:30pm in the Livermore room at Marin Art and Garden Center. The class will be taught by members of the club (John, Chris, Jay and Craig). Plan to bring your own tree(s) and plan on working on the same tree(s) both nights. Please call Michaele at 945-9930 if you are interested. The signup sheet will be out at the repotting workshops in February.

Do you have something to share?

Send newsletter submissions to: Sharon Bone, sbone27@comcast.net. Deadline for inclusion in the March 2009 issue is February 18.

MARIN BONSAI CLUB EVENTS

February 3, 2009 - Workshop

Tuesday, 7pm Livermore Room

Our monthly bring-your-own-tree workshop with Tim Kong and Jay McDonald. \$10 /\$15 non-members.

February 17, 2009 – Repotting Workshop

Tuesday, 7:30pm Livermore Room

Bring-your-own-tree repotting workshop.

March 3, 2009 - Workshop

Tuesday, 7pm Livermore Room

Our monthly bring-your-own-tree workshop with Tim Kong and Jay McDonald. \$10 /\$15 non-members.

March 17, 2009 – Demonstration

Tuesday, 7:30pm Livermore Room

Bob Shimon will be doing a demo on redwood trees. Redwoods will be available for sale.



2008 Marin Bonsai Club Officers:

Past President	Candace Key	415-491-1989
VP Programs	Craig Thompson	415-472-6685
VP Shows	Jay McDonald	415-847-8909
Secretary	Michael Jaffe	415-945-9930
Treasurer	Frances Noles	415-461-0437
Historian	Carolyn Robbins	415-460-0339
Editor	Sharon Bone	415-898-9618
Librarian	Tim Burke	415-259-7372
Hospitality	Marlene Philley	415-924-5134
Docent Coord	Jeanette Arnold	415-883-2651

Marin Bonsai Club

PO Box 437

Ross, CA 94957

www.marinbonsai.org

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