



Bonsai Wire

Marin Bonsai Club

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

June 2009

Breaking News!!!

We have a new club president, or we will once the club officially elects him, or re-elects in this case. Craig Thompson has offered to fill out this year and next as our fearless leader.

The board is thrilled to have Craig back at the helm, but to make things official we do need to have an election and vote for any and all candidates who might wish to hold this lofty office. Please show up at the June meeting to cast your vote.

Once he assumes the role of club president, Craig will be relinquishing his position of VP of Programs, so we need to fill this spot. Anyone interested? This is one of the most fun and interesting jobs on the board and takes little time throughout the year. Please contact a board member if you are interested in getting more involved in the workings of the club.

Thank you Craig!!!!

Marin County Fair

There is one last chance to fine tune your trees for the Marin County Fair show at our June workshop. Bring your trees in for final tweaking by Jay and Tim and a finish of top dressing and/or moss. BYOM if you have it. Make sure your trees are very healthy as they will be indoors from Monday evening through Sunday - a long time for the trees and stressful. We will do our best to keep them happy while on display, but the healthier they are the better they will fare. Please deliver your trees on Monday, June 29 from 4-8pm.

Also a call for everyone to sign up for at least one and hopefully more shifts at the Fair. It is fun, you learn lots, you get a free ticket to the Fair and we really need everyone to participate to make sure it

isn't a chore for anyone. This is one thing members of all ages and experience levels can help with and we hope to see you there. The sign up board will be at the June workshop and meeting or call Michael Jaffe to get your name on the list.

June Meeting

In June the Marin Bonsai club will welcome Kora Dalager to our meeting on the 16th to discuss accent and companion plants for bonsai displays. This is a rare opportunity to learn how to properly develop and display these beautiful plants that captivate us at many bonsai exhibits. Kora has been active in bonsai for 20 years and has been a teacher for the last 10. She will discuss not only how to grow and assemble accent plants, but how they are to be displayed and how best to coordinate them with the main focus of the display. Kora has gained a deep appreciation for the art of bonsai through her many trips to Japan as a tour organizer and this should be a fascinating and enlightening meeting. Please plan to attend.

May Meeting with Bob and Polly Gould

Club members were treated to a fine program on satsuki azaleas by Bob Gould at our May meeting. Bob is one of our favorite guests at the club because he always brings a wealth of knowledge on his subject and presents it in such a relaxed style that it is easy for even beginners to jump in with questions and comments. And jump in we did at the meeting.

Although Bob did give us lots of tips on how to take care of our azalea bonsai to keep them healthy and happy and have the best opportunities for styling them, the thrust of his presentation was more about

what to look for in show trees and how the Japanese bonsai masters grow and evaluate the trees. He mentioned that in Japan most people who keep azaleas keep only satsukis and not other bonsai trees and vice versa. Their peculiarities in styling, growing and handling are in some ways the opposite of pines and junipers, for instance, and someone who has been working on a pine is advised to think twice to reset their mind that the azalea in front of them is not an apical grower, but rather grows more strongly at the base of the tree. There are also very specific times of the year for styling, removing flower buds, controlling and directing growth and repotting as satsukis are not as forgiving as many other trees, or at least will yield better results when their preferred schedules are followed.

One of the trees Bob brought (forgive me if I didn't catch the long Japanese name) was flowering beautifully, but sadly was likely to have finished its fine display before the Bay Area Satsuki Association's show the last weekend in May at Lake Merritt in Oakland. It was our good fortune however to see it and hear Bob's explanations of what was good and not so good about this seemingly perfect tree. Ever the humble artist Bob was quick to point out that much of the beautiful display was just plain good luck, but also noted the efforts he had made over the years to train and style the tree into the beautiful shape we experienced. Of note was his comment that of the satsukis with multicolored and patterned flowers, there is always a dominant color. Over many years this dominant color will overtake the tree and there will be just this one color, but in the interim there is an ideal placement and formula for what makes perfect color placement. White flowers are best at the top and there should be a nice distribution of colors and patterns over the tree with the dominant color being only about 10% of the whole. On the showiest of trees you may not be able to see the structure of the tree at all, only clusters of perfect flowers floating like clouds on the barest form of a branch showing underneath. These flowers should be dense, but not touch each other. They should not face out or down, only up, and there is much pruning of buds and flowers to achieve this perfect balance.

The detailed information Bob shared about how the most beautiful satsuki azaleas are developed for show will give us all a much better appreciation of this complex and intriguing species. What better place to practice your newfound observational skills and show off for friends and family than the BASA show on Saturday and Sunday, May 30-31 at the

Lake Merritt Garden Center. It is one of the most beautiful shows of the year and you don't need to know anything about satsuki azaleas to sigh with appreciation at the gorgeous and varied colors of these inspiring trees. See you there!

Here are a few growing tips Bob shared for satsuki azaleas:

- DON'T OVER WATER! The most frequent cause of death in azaleas is root rot.
- Don't cut buds until May so the tree will benefit from the moisture the new growth pulls through the tree.
- They love to be pruned and trimmed in March and April - they will bounce right back with new growth, but you will sacrifice flowers for the year
- Best fertilizer is a 5-5-5 organic mix which Bob puts in tea bags left around the base of the tree - 4 per big tree, add monthly
- Best soil is Kanuma from Japan. Put larger size on the bottom layer, then medium and smallest size, no less than 1/8 inch, on the top and chop in
- For repotting, cut root mass with a knife, one inch on all sides and about half the depth, depending on the pot it was in. Don't bare root or comb out roots. You want a brick.
- Satsukis love humidity, but are prone to root rot, so the best advice is DON'T OVER WATER! Let the soil get just slightly dry before watering.
- Repot every 3 years

One more time, DON'T OVER WATER AZALEAS

Web note:

By coincidence I picked up an issue of Bonsai Focus (formerly Bonsai Europe) and there was a terrific article on just this subject of working with satsuki azaleas. They have a great website at bonsaieurope.com and here is the link to the specific article I was reading about Hiruharu Kobayashi styling satsuki 'osakazuki'. There is no text in this section, but fabulous photos. A great website to explore.

http://www.bonsaieurope.org/photo/main.php?q2_vie=core.ShowItem&q2_itemId=936

- Candace Key

Taskmaster - June 2009

June in the North San Francisco microclimates is a time of cool to chilly nights and warm or occasionally hot days. Wind is often a drying factor, as inland heat and ocean cool push each other back and forth, and young leaves or new growth transpire lots of water. So be extra careful about watering, scratching the soil to allow better penetration, and rotating the pots every week.

This is the last chance to reliably air layer a new tree out of a garden or yard plant or in order to improve older bonsai. Roots form readily in the warm weather, and by September you might just have a new tree. Air layers which were started in February to March should be cut and lifted if not already done, after carefully exposing the new root ball to make sure it's viable and ready. Some take longer, and weather conditions vary year to year. Plan to secure the new tree in its pot by looping wire over the branches and crotches rather than over the tender new root system or you're likely to tear those roots off.

Defoliation is popular in May and June, but keep in mind it's only for healthy, vigorous trees and many experts warn against defoliating more often than every other year. Cut the leaves and leave the petioles (leaf stems), and leave the smallest leaves on the tree to balance overall leaf size when the new growth comes in. Maples, elms, liquidambar, zelkovas and hornbeams can all be leaf pruned or completely defoliated, but not beech trees, which don't grow back well and may have twig and even branch die off. Feed them well, then defoliate a week or two later, then put them in light shade out of the wind and water less (more lightly) for 3 weeks with no fertilizer. Then fertilize with 70% cottonseed and 30% bone meal sprinkled over the soil and scratched in with a stick once in early June and again in August. Weak solutions of 0-10-10 in between is enough otherwise and helps yield brighter fall color.

Pinching on conifer, evergreens and junipers is essential, but be sure to just pinch the tips to control growth and shape - not back to old growth or last year's green, as that will discourage or stunt new growth. On firs, cedars, and hinoki pinch out the center growth only, when it gets longer than a half-inch or so, and let the pads grow as they will.

Cut off azalea seedpods and spent blooms and new buds when 80% of blooming is done. Cut back to two shoots per terminal except at the top of the plant, where you should leave three. Azaleas do best

if repotted in March, in deeper pots than other bonsai because of their peculiar dense rooting habits. Cover the soil with chopped moss to prevent surface dry-out, and water sparingly but consistently to prevent root rot. Keep mosses from growing on or layering over trunks and roots to prevent bark rot. Gently wire all spring shoots as they have mostly hardened off now, but make a note to check wires in 5-6 weeks for possible (probable) removal.

Spray with Malathion or Orthenex every other week in rotation for can and can't-see bugs and funguses in 60-75% solutions, late in the afternoon.

Put cascades in water pots 1/3 to 1/2 the depth of the cascade pot for a few days in the first and third week of June, and again in July. A week or so is appropriate for small pots in very hot weather, and for all pots in very hot spells. A weak Miracle-Gro solution is a reasonable filling for the water pot. Wisteria drinks heavily and needs a water pot to 1/3 depth, but don't feed with nitrogen-containing fertilizers, as wisteria roots will fix nitrogen from the air, and you run the risk of getting all leaves and length and no blooms if you add more.

Candle pinching on black pines begins in late May, and continues through into June. The biggest candles got 2/3 of the length removed on or before May first, and they get cut back all the way now, along with the shortest candles. Ten days later cut the medium sized ones, and in ten more days cut the largest of the remaining medium-sized ones. No fertilizer for 3 weeks or so, and mist when you can on hot days. White/five needle pine get their candles broken off leaving four or five sets of needles when the candles get close to an inch long regardless of the date.

Get ready for summer's long hot glare. Find bits of shade for tender plants. Create trees that will make people stare. Get ready to live in short pants. Make sure no tender roots are left bare. Do battle with bugs and ants. Rotate pots for sun and air. Let your heart join in life's dance. Find peace in the changing of the season.

- The Taskmaster

Marin Bonsai Field Trip, May 16, 2009

A great time was had by all on our semi-annual field trip to the Gold Country. There were eight of us who started out from Marin. Listening to the radio, we heard about a bad accident on Highway 50, so we had to take the long way (but very scenic) through Auburn over to Placerville where our first stop was Jay McDonald's brother Greg's house. Greg is an expert collector of yamadori trees, especially oaks. He has set up a nice little growing ground in his back yard where he has several different kinds of trees in the ground, fattening them up for wonderful future bonsai. Some of Greg's oaks are the best I've ever seen, especially a huge Gold Cup oak that he collected that is sure to be a future star at a bonsai show. Greg also had a fantastic Lodgepole pine with a double trunk.

From Greg's we went to El Dorado Bonsai's new store, just a mile or so away. Fred and Dolly mostly sell rocks and related stuff, but they still have a nice assortment of pots and other bonsai paraphernalia, including suiseki.

Next stop was Lotus Bonsai, about a 20 minute drive from El Dorado. For those of you who haven't been, Lotus is an amazing place. Literally thousand of trees, from \$10 to \$10,000, so there is something for everyone. It's just fun walking around Scott and Bolet's property drooling over the great maples, junipers, Chinese elms, white pines and just about any other tree you can imagine. Peter Adams was holding a workshop when we were there. Several of us bought trees...including a white pine, California juniper, crabapple and a fat little Chinese elm. Look for these in upcoming shows!

The most amazing thing we saw was at Lotus. They have several beautiful, large Chinese elms at the nursery. One of them has a large cavity which goes from the middle of the trunk down to the base. At

the base of the tree, through a small hole, you can see a tiny little bird's nest with a few little teeny baby birds chirping away. Scott Chad told us this is the third year the bird has made a nest in the tree. I don't know what the person who buys the tree is going to do...certainly not transport it back home in spring when the birds are still there.



Benches of bonsai at Lotus Bonsai.

Last stop was Muriyama's nursery in Sacramento. In the 100 degree heat, but fortunately under shade cloth, we again were wide eyed at all the beautiful bonsai...junipers, white pines, ficus, azaleas (in full bloom, many of them), and all sorts of other trees. This is a great place to get soil components, so we loaded up buckets of lava and bags of akadama and Japanese pumice.

We do a field trip every year, sometimes going locally, but every other year making a trip to the Gold Country. This is a great opportunity to buy wonderful material and having seasoned club members help you pick out trees. We'll let you know far in advance about the next trip.

- Craig Thompson

The bonsai field trip gang at Muriyama's in Sacramento.



BAY AREA BONSAI EVENTS

May 30-31 Sacramento, CA

American Bonsai Association: 50th Anniversary Show, Sale & Celebration, 10AM-4:30PM, at the Shepard Garden & Arts Center, 3330 McKinley Blvd. Hands-on workshops for all levels from novice to advanced enthusiasts; large member and vendor sales areas; raffles and door prizes. Demonstration daily at 1:30PM by renowned bonsai professionals. Timm Johnson, 916-362-8147; BonsaiTimm@aol.com

May 30-31 Oakland, CA

Bay Area Satsuki Aikokai: 15th Annual Satsuki Bonsai Show at the Lakeside Park Garden Center, 666 Bellevue Ave. Hours are Saturday, 10AM-5PM and Sunday, 10AM-4PM. Demonstrations at 1:30PM using mature trees by Rick Garcia on Saturday and by Johnny Uchida on Sunday. Large selection of trees on sale. For more information contact Bob Gould (925) 935-1914.

June 6 Danville, CA

Ruben Guzman's Annual Sale – Azaleas, junipers, maples, pines, Princess persimmons and more. Mature bonsai and starters. Plants, pots, stands and stones. 9am-3pm. 305 El Pintado Heights Drive. 925-837-7804

June 13-14 Oakland, CA

California Suiseki Society 14th annual suiseki show 10am-5pm Saturday and Sunday. Lakeside Garden Center, 666 Bellevue Ave., Oakland (Lake Merritt area). For further info, contact Felix G. Rivera 510 527-6255, felixsuiseki@gmail.com.

June 13-14 San Jose, CA

San Jose Betsuin Bonsai Club: 39th Annual Bonsai Exhibit at the San Jose Betsuin Buddhist Church, 640 North 5th Street. Hours: Saturday, 12PM-5PM, and Sunday 11AM-4PM. Demonstration at 1PM on both days by "Mr. California Juniper", Harry Hirao. Plant and vendor sales both days. Free admission. For more info, call Ken Azuma 408-730-4506.

Aug 29-30 Santa Rosa, CA

Redwood Empire Bonsai Society: 26th Annual Bonsai Show at the Santa Rosa Veterans Memorial Building, 1351 Maple Ave. Hours are Saturday, 10AM-5PM and Sunday, 10AM-4PM. Demonstration at 1:30PM, both days. Saturday features, from Japan Bonsai Master Yasuo Mitsuya. Sunday features Bonsai Master Kathy Shaner. Over 200 trees exhibited, along with a large vendor room, members'

consignment sales, raffles, door prizes, benefit drawings and ongoing club member demonstrations. For more information call Bob Shimon 707-884-4126 or email shimon@mcn.org. Web page: www.rebsbonsai.org/index.html.



Summer Picnic!

Save the date –
Sunday, July 19
We will be having our annual summer picnic... somewhere in Novato. Details to come.

NAME TAGS

Now is the time to speak up if you do NOT have a name tag. If you are a new member or perhaps a long time member that we haven't seen in a while, we would like EVERYONE to have a name tag.

A couple of years ago we switched to a very good looking maroon name tag with beige letters that matches our happi coats... We will be ordering the name tags and they will arrive before the show at the Fair (don't forget to sign up for your shifts).

The charge is \$6 per name tag and this can be paid when you receive your name tag.

Please call Michaele at 945-9930 if you need a name tag. We need at least 3 names to place an order.

Beginners Workshops with Tim Kong

August 20 and 27, 7-9:30pm

OR

September 10 and 17, 7-9:30pm

Cost: \$65 per person for two workshops.

Instruction, trees and wire provided

Class size limited to 12

Livermore Room, Marin Art & Garden Center

Please call Michaele at 945-9930 to register

MARIN BONSAI CLUB EVENTS

June 2, 2009 : Workshop

Starting at 7pm, our monthly bring-your-own-tree workshop with Tim Kong and Jay McDonald. Fee is \$10 for members, \$20 for non-members.

June 16, 2009 : Demo on accent plants

Accent plants are an important part of showing a tree and Kora Dalager will show us how to make some nice ones. She will create a couple of accents, which will be raffled at the meeting.

July 1-5, 2009 : Marin Fair Annual Show

Our annual show will be held at the Marin County Fair in the Marin Civic Center auditorium, San Rafael. Hours are 11am to 10pm daily.

August 4, 2009 : Annual Auction

Auction starts at 7:30pm, viewing starts at 7pm. Bring a tree to sell, bring your checkbook to buy a tree, pot or other bonsai paraphernalia. Great deals will be had!!!

For a list of currently scheduled MBC events for the remainder of the year, see

<http://www.marinbonsai.org/events/index.php>.



Marin Bonsai Club

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 |
| News 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

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www.marinbonsai.org

Address Correction Requested

Please Forward



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