

Bonsai Wire

Marin Bonsai Club

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

March 2009

Foster Program at Bonsai Garden

Become a foster parent of one or a number of the beautiful and outstanding trees at the Bonsai Garden at Lake Merritt.

Becoming a foster parent of a tree means that experienced bonsai volunteers are invited to choose a tree - elm, olive, oak, redwood, etc - to care for on an ongoing basis.

Working with the Curator, Kathy Shaner, either under direct or indirect supervision, the foster parent performs necessary work on a tree to maintain its growth and health. Usually this involves repotting (paying particular attention to the roots), choosing the right pot for the tree, pruning leaves and branches, pinching new buds, defoliating deciduous trees, decandling pines, and all the activity surrounding the tree that is necessary for a healthy and beautiful bonsai tree. General maintenance of the tree is performed throughout the year. During a tree's dormant period, care will usually consist of removing unwanted moss, cleaning out debris from the soil, shining pots, clipping wayward growth, etc. However, during the growing season more attention is given to the tree(s) and visits are often necessary 2-3 times a month (depending on type of tree), at which time pruning, pinching and weeding can be done.

Several of our Marin Bonsai Club members are currently participating in the Program, and have gained expanded knowledge and experience in the proper care and maintenance of particular trees.

This is a worthwhile activity benefiting both the trees at the Bonsai Garden and the foster parent. All experienced bonsai members, volunteers, and docents are welcomed and encouraged to participate in this Program.

The Curator is available at the Garden many times throughout the year. You may contact the Garden at 510-763-8409 to find out dates that she will be available to discuss your intentions of becoming a foster parent.

Bonsai Garden at Lake Merritt

Many activities occur each month at the Bonsai Garden at Lake Merritt. Of particular note are the 4th Sunday free bonsai demonstrations or low cost workshops. Each month's event, either a demo or a workshop, is planned according to available teachers, tree material, season or type of work needed for a particular tree. The demonstration may spotlight conifers, pines, deciduous trees, tropical trees, defoliating, repotting, decandling, etc.

The demonstration planned for March 22 will feature deciduous trees: pinching buds on maples, elms, oaks, zelkovas, beech, etc., when and why we pinch buds, and what happens to the tree after doing so.

Information about each month's event can be found at the GSBF Bonsai Garden at Lake Merritt website <http://web.mac.com/ltferzoco/GSBF/Home.html>.

- Frances Noles

Let's Not Forget Our Assistants

Oh look at that cute little plant. How many times have we heard or said that? Our companion or accent plants are known as shitakusa when they are complementary to a tree. If it is a primary focus, then it is a kusamono. I first became fascinated after making table decorations for our fall show three years ago—just some sedum, blue grass and something else (senior excuse) in small green plastic

pots with raffia tied around. The response was encouraging so I thought maybe this is something I can work on and I have. Naturally, every time I go to a show, the shitakusa are the favorite focus for me and I am always inspired by plant material, pots, and arrangements. They are such an integral part of any display.

We look to a variety of selections: succulents, grasses, wild strawberries, ferns, clover, herbs, ground cover, and ???—anything that is small, unusual and attractive. Use your imagination: look for color (silver/white is great); small leaves (what is new?). It does not necessarily need to have flowers. Black mondo grass looks striking in a white/cream pot. Remember—simplicity. Use shohin or mame soil. Pot selection is equally important—not too big and don't clash the color of the pot with the plant material. If you have a somewhat flat container without a hole, use muck. When you assemble your pot, sometimes it takes several attempts to make it look right. Be sure to keep the plant(s) which you are working with and not using in a bowl of water while working so they do not dry out. If you have difficulty placing plants, use a chopstick; go to the kitchen or garage and find something to assist you. Be resourceful. Little pots require screen as well but they do not have to be wired in. Our shitakusa or kusamono need water almost every day so check them diligently. In just a matter of weeks, you will see growth and stability; you'll have a smile on your face. Those little darlings look lovely!

The final touch: Place your creation on a waterproof slab no thicker than 1/4 inch, larger than the pot size; it could be round, oblong, curved. Find redwood, madrone, cedar, maple, cherry, etc., and even bamboo. These can be purchased from vendors or online. Now look at your beautiful display and give yourself a pat on the back--have a glass of wine or beer or better yet, champagne!

A tremendous resource is Lone Pine Gardens in Sebastopol. Janet especially is very knowledgeable about plant choices and all their attributes. They have a huge plant selection in addition to an assortment of pots. Check out our local nurseries for plants in 2" to 4" containers. Armstrong has a "nooks and crannies" table with many possibilities. For pots, there's Sunnyside in San Anselmo, Yabusaki (Dwight Way Nursery) in Berkeley and Grove Way Nursery in Hayward. Check out the vendors at the Mammoth Sale and at the REBS show.

Remember, Uncle Jay likes the small, beautiful shitakusa. And, more importantly, we will all learn more about this aspect of bonsai when **Kora Dalager** speaks to us in June. She is an excellent sensei and we are very fortunate to have her living in the Bay Area. Her enthusiasm is infectious. I have taken two of her workshops and come away with more knowledge and gorgeous little accents.

- Jeanette Arnold

Taka Mori's Workshop Schedule at Lotus Bonsai Nursery

Lotus Bonsai Nursery is now finalizing Takahiro "Taka" Mori's scheduled visit to the U.S. this spring. Here is a chance to get your Bonsai taken to the next level by a very talented Bonsai artist from Japan on his fourth visit to the U.S. and the nursery. The fee for these workshops is \$75 for each day, and will be limited to six (6) people, first come first served. Wire and soil are included in the price of the workshop. Students may bring two trees to work on. Bring your own lunch and tools. Classes are from 9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.

The workshop dates at Lotus Bonsai Nursery are:

April 18, 19, and 26 and May 1, 7, and 8

Please let Lotus know as soon as possible if you are interested in booking a seat for any or all of these days. Workshops will occur, rain or shine. This is a great opportunity to work on your trees with a gifted Bonsai artist from Japan at a reasonable cost.

Lotus Bonsai Nursery & Gardens
1435 Lower Lake Drive, Placerville, CA 95667
(530) 622-9681 Phone, (530) 622-9396 Fax

'A positive attitude may not solve all your problems, but it will annoy enough people to make it worth the effort.'

Herm Albright (1876 - 1944)

Do you have something to contribute?

Send newsletter submissions (articles, photos, whatever) to: Sharon Bone, sbone27@comcast.net. Deadline for inclusion in the April 2009 issue is March 25.

GREAT NEWS!!

Effective May 11, 2009 the price of a first class postage stamp will increase to 44¢! Actually, that was the bad news. The great news is: that is how much each of us can save Marin Bonsai Club by getting our news online.

Bonsai Wire is now available on our website at <http://www.marinbonsai.org/newsletters.php>.

Starting with the April 2009 issue, instead of snail mailing a printed copy of the newsletter, we will be emailing a link to the newsletter page to those of you we have email addresses for.

Please **let us know** if you:

- Would still prefer to receive the printed newsletter in the mail
- Would like to update your profile with an email address
- Have signed up as a family and have multiple email addresses you wish to use

There will be several printed copies of the newsletter available at the workshops and meetings.

The newsletter editor can be reached at sbone27@comcast.net or 415-898-9618.

Docenting at the Bonsai Garden at Lake Merritt

Did you know that we have one of the top four public bonsai gardens right here in the Bay Area? It's the Bonsai Garden at Lake Merritt, formerly known as the Collection North. There are some unbelievable trees there and at any one time there are around 60 trees on display. This time of year (March) you have some beautiful Japanese quince in full flower, maples, hornbeams and hawthorns that are just leafing out, 1000 year old California junipers, some amazing redwoods, and many others.

And here's some more news. The Marin Bonsai Club has agreed to work there every month; the morning shift of the fourth Saturday, which is 10am to 1pm. We have agreed as a club to have two members there every month. I strongly encourage everyone in the Club, especially new members, to volunteer at least once a year. You really don't have to do much, just greet people as they come into the Garden and hand them a brochure. You may be asked a few questions, but believe me, you will know more about bonsai than 99% of the people

that come into the Garden. I've been working at the Garden for the 8 years I've been in bonsai and it's always a rewarding experience. Kathy Shaner, one of the top bonsai masters in the USA, is often working there (she is the curator) and it's always fun to be around her and observe her and others work on bonsai in the back area.

So if you haven't docented there yet, why not give it a try? Please talk to Jeanette Arnold at our next meeting (Jeanette is our docent coordinator for the Garden). It will be great for your bonsai education and you will be doing your Marin Bonsai Club a great favor.

- Craig Thompson

BAY AREA BONSAI EVENTS

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 4-5 **San Mateo, CA**
Sei Boku Bonsai Kai: 26th Annual Show will be held at the San Mateo Garden Center, 605 Parkside Wy. from 10AM-4PM both days. Demonstrations will be at 1PM each day. (Steve Jang on Saturday and Valerie Monroe on Sunday.) "Dr Bonsai" will be there to answer all your bonsai questions. Trees, pots and other bonsai-related items will be for sale. khaley57@gmail.com

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

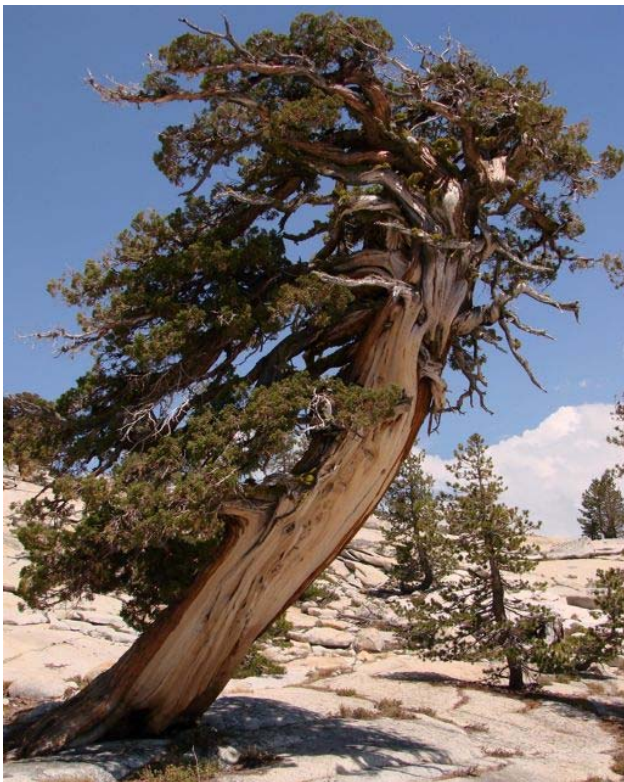
Humboldt Bonsai Society: Annual show in conjunction with the American Rhododendron Society at Saint Bernard Elementary School, 115 Henderson. Hours are 10AM- 4 PM. Demonstrations and benefit drawings both days. Free admission. Contact information, Bill Hegy, 707-499-3459.

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.

Do you have an inspiration from nature?



A real life study of a Sierra Juniper at 10,000 feet in Yosemite Park, 2007. Photographer cmr

To see this picture in its full awesomeness, check it out in the online version of the newsletter http://www.marinbonsai.org/images/pdf/Mar2009_MBC_Newsletter.pdf That's right. Full color. Zoom in on that baby till it fills the screen!

Send your inspirations to sbone27@comcast.net.

Book Review of Michael Hagedorn's Post-Dated - The Schooling of an Irreverent Bonsai Monk

I didn't intend to buy this book. The author had a few square inches of real estate on the end of a member sales table at the Bay Island Bonsai show in January. He made eye contact. I picked up the book to be polite. The subject was of interest, naturally, the tale of his bonsai apprenticeship in Japan, but I am skeptical of these literary ventures by amateur writers. Most are poorly written, overly glib and about as deep as a foot bath. I wasn't expecting much. Still I'm the supportive type and leafed through Post-Dated - The Schooling of an Irreverent Bonsai Monk, and read a few paragraphs just to satisfy my curiosity.

I will admit here and now I am a harsh literary critic. I have no patience for poor writing (except my own). I will suffer mediocre writing when the subject matter interests me, but nothing will induce me to read even a chapter of the most fascinating story if the author can't string two sentences together in a competent fashion. I don't expect artistry, just competence and it is amazing to me how much gets published that isn't even competent writing. So, as I was saying, I was expecting to be underwhelmed by this book.

Well, I was amazed, delighted and captivated by Michael Hagedorn's Post-Dated (you will have to read to the end of the book to understand the title's meaning). He not only writes competently, but artfully as well. There were many times I stopped reading to appreciate a clever or poetic turn of a phrase, or found myself marveling at how much I was enjoying just the act of reading Hagedorn's prose, never mind the content. I also loved the flow of the book. There wasn't a conscious attempt to follow a strict chronological account of his apprenticeship with Mr. Shinji Suzuki, one of the premier bonsai masters in Japan, but he does in an unobtrusive way give you a frame work of understanding of how he came to be there and the progression of his education in bonsai, Japanese culture and philosophy.

The stories are concise and to the point, toggling between his diary entries at the time and thoughts and recollections of the events after the fact. I often found myself reading only a short chapter at a time, then sitting back to savor the experience I had lived vicariously, or the insight Hagedorn had revealed. The book is deep too. We are talking serious ocean depth here, but you won't feel over your head, no matter your level of interest. The author has the rare talent of writing so that you gain insights on many different planes regardless of your tolerance for navel gazing and you can take away as little or as much as you have the time for and interest in.

To cut to the chase, this book provides great stories of what it is like to be a bonsai apprentice in Japan. Some of the stories will confirm what you have heard over the years and most will expound on that knowledge with fascinating detail and insightful observations. You get a sense of Hagedorn's personal journey as well which makes the book more intimate, but this isn't true confessions and there are no 'ready for my Oprah moment' quotes which is refreshing. You get the sense that Hagedorn wrote the book for himself and we are merely privileged to glimpse his travails and triumphs which I for one know I would never have the patience to live and work through myself.

If I have a criticism of the book it is that it isn't longer. Hagedorn knows how to leave his audience on the edge of satiety, but I felt a little cheated when I got to the end, frustrated that there wasn't one last tidbit to finish off my appetite. Maybe we will just have to lure Michael to a club event to tell us more stories and give us more thoughts to consider as we deepen our bonsai practice and community here at the Marin Bonsai Club.

In short, I highly recommend this book and since I intend to hold onto my copy for rereading I suggest you implore our lovely club Librarian, Tim Burke to prevail upon our tight fisted Treasurer, Frances Noles to purchase a volume or two of this very special book so more members can all share in the knowledge, passion and wisdom Michael Hagedorn has to share. Then again, you can visit <http://crataegus.wordpress.com/about/> and order the book for yourself.

- An Anonymous Past President and book reviewer

Taskmaster - March 2009

The big jobs for this time of year in the Northern San Francisco Bay Area micro-climates are repotting, pinching back, spraying for bugs and fertilizing.

Any pot that hasn't drained well in all the rains must be repotted now. Deciduous trees have to come first, as they are beginning to leaf out, then the evergreens. Wiring now is a bad idea on all deciduous trees because new growth is fast and the wire will cut in before your know it. Pinching back on elms and maples may need to be done every day or so for a while. Maples get pinched just as the new set of leaves emerge beyond the first or second set of leaves. This rule applies to all deciduous plants with the exception of elm, zelkova and other alternate leaf pattern trees which get pinched after the third leaf. Pinch lightly on the growing tips only

of evergreens to prevent long leggy new growth patterns. (Heavier pinching comes later).

Feeding should ideally be a 70-30 percent mix of cotton seed meal/bone meal, 2 tablespoons per twelve inch pot and proportionally less for small pots, spread around the outer perimeter and scratched in well. Half strength Miracle Gro™ works well 4-5 weeks after repotting, and then the 70/30 mix in another 2-3 weeks to kick off the spring growth. No feeding for 4 weeks after repotting. For cascades, full strength Miracle Gro™ foliar feedings this month and next should be 3 times on lower, 2 times on middle, and once on upper branches to balance the growth pattern, with the 70/30 mix in the soil itself. Too much fertilizer and water now will mean big leaves and long internodes later. Azaleas and other early bloomers still get only 0-10-10 until blooming ends.

Aphids, ants, green worms, inch worms and spider mites all wake up and chow down this month. Spray with Malathion™ one week and with Sevin™ the next using slightly weaker solutions than full strength.

While working on trees keep tools from spreading diseases by soaking them in full strength Lysol™, which will kill contaminants without damaging the tools like bleach or other corrosives might.

Remember to let all branches that need to be fatter grow long. Remember to use a roomier pot if the roots need to get strong. Remember that if you think twice before every cut you're less likely to be wrong. Remember that every little tree holds the potential to move your skills along. Remember that every day is a gift that can stir your heart like a song. Sing it! It'll help you get along.

- The Taskmaster

Lone Pine Gardens in Sebastopol is offering a series of demonstrations (no workshops) from 10:00 am to noon, weather permitting.

- Saturday, March 28 – Grove Planting Demonstration and Discussion
- Saturday, April 25 – Succulent Dishgardens
- May - To be announced

All attendees get a 10% discount at the nursery on the day of the event. Please check out their website www.lonepinegardens.com for further information.

MARIN BONSAI CLUB EVENTS

March 3, 2009: Workshop

Tuesday, 7pm Livermore Room

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

March 17, 2009: Bob Shimon on Redwoods

Tuesday, 7:30pm Livermore Room

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

April 7, 2009: Workshop

Tuesday, 7pm Livermore Room

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

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

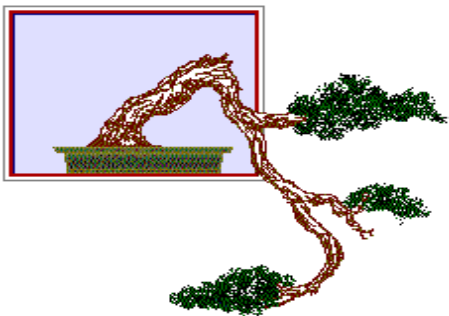
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