

# Bonsai Wire

## Marin Bonsai Club

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

**March 2010**

### Message from the President...

This month's theme is about retaining healthy trees in your collection. The colder, wet days are transitioning into warm, drier days, with longer periods of sun and light. At the same time the trees are awakening from a period of dormancy and overwintering. And you're ready to start working on them, as you can see they need pruning, repotting, wiring etc. But first, why not check their health before doing anything else?

Generally speaking a tree's healthiness is the result of its age, previous growing history and the overall growing environment. None of these parameters should be out of equilibrium with the other, otherwise the tree will suffer. In a nutshell, no matter what plans you have for a tree, if it isn't in a healthy state from the outset, any pruning of the branches, trunk or roots could have a disastrous effect; likewise, applying fertilizer to a sick tree is like ringing a death knell. If in doubt, set the tree to one side, start trying to improve its health, and focus on a healthier tree.

Sometimes it is so easy to fall in love with a tree at an auction or nursery and bring it home – only to find, for example, that it requires a particular regime such as mostly shade throughout the day, and you can only provide a sunny spot, or it needs to be kept relatively moist and your watering regime cannot meet that requirement. The lack of an appropriate growing environment (water, light, air circulation, soil quality) is usually the number one way to induce stress in a tree. The second way to cause stress in a tree is inappropriate or untimely pruning of roots or branches. Both types of stress immediately weaken a tree and make it susceptible to pests or a combination of pests. Reaching for the pesticide is rarely successful as it is hard to treat both the

condition(s) that caused the stress in the first place, along with the pest(s), without seriously weakening the tree or even killing it over time.

Conversely using fertilizer to restore health is almost as bad for a weak tree. A sudden boost of nitrogen often induces an attack by aphids attracted to very lush, young foliage, which in turn attracts sooty mold that feeds on the aphid secretions. While mold isn't disastrous (though can affect photosynthesis) the tree spends more energy fighting off the aphid attack, than it spends on growing happily. And you are left with the problem of how to move the tree from survival mode on to a healthy growing curve.

So how do you maintain a healthy growing curve for your trees? A basic understanding of plant science is really useful together with knowledge of a tree's maintenance requirements and guidelines for pruning etc. We have a good library of reference books to refer to, and at this month's March 16 program our Taskmaster will be presenting his holistic approach to horticulture – based on science, much experience and some judicious experimentation. This is a great opportunity to learn more about the care of your precious trees. Please come and join us!

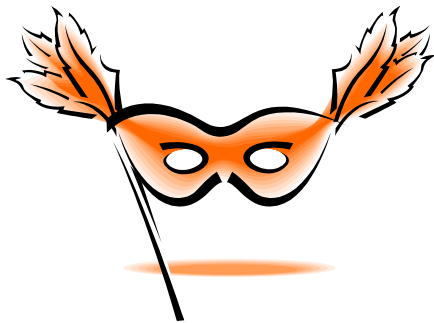
- Alison Seaman

### Program Notes:

We have had a great turnout for the repotting workshops this winter and it is encouraging to see so many people taking such good care of their trees. The window of opportunity for repotting many species is quickly closing, especially with our warm

winter weather, but if you still need some help please bring them to the March 2 workshop for assistance from our experts. Don't forget your protective table coverings and to clean up afterwards!

### **March Program:**



### **The Taskmaster Revealed**

Ever wonder who that guy is who writes the Taskmaster? Who knows when to fertilize with what? Who knows how to spot the bugs and varmints on our trees and what to do about them? Who knows when to repot what? Who knows the best time for pruning and defoliating? Who ends his column with puzzling little pearls of wisdom? Well at the March meeting all will be revealed. The Taskmaster has a special program planned to bring you up to speed on the care, feeding and nurturing of your precious bonsai. Don't miss this vital horticultural discussion and what is sure to be a life saving (talking about trees here) and entertaining program.

### **Ted Matson Workshop**

The Ted Matson workshop in May is almost filled. We have just a couple of slots open for the Sunday, May 16 event, however if there are still plenty of members and guests interested in taking advantage of this rare opportunity to study with one of bonsai's best instructors we have the opportunity to add a workshop for Monday the 15th. The full day session, 6 hours, is \$70, or you can do a half day, for \$40. Please contact Candace immediately to secure your place in the workshop.

I can't emphasize enough how much anyone with an interest in bonsai will benefit from time spent with Ted Matson. Whether you have 4 trees or 40, are an old pro or a rank beginner you will not be disappointed. Don't let this opportunity to improve your bonsai knowledge and skills pass you by.

### **The Club has Spoken**

Thank you everyone who filled out the questionnaire about bonsai programs you would like to see the club support in the coming months. We had a great response and surprisingly consistent requests.

The operative word was Interactive. It seems you all want to participate more in the programs we present, get your fingers limbered up with wiring practice, have more hands on opportunities in working with bonsai material, you want to go out and dig your own 'urban gold' and shop 'til you drop at bonsai nurseries in the area. You want to learn more about how to care for your trees and how to select the most promising material. You want to be exposed to new bonsai talent as well as members of other clubs who bring a different perspective to their art.

You want it all! And we, your intrepid Board of Directors, plan to bring it to you. However, we are going to need your help. As we reach out to provide new opportunities to the club, it will take more time and effort and we will need more involvement from all of you. If you can help coordinate a workshop, organize a field trip, investigate new bonsai talent, or contribute in any way we need to hear from you. To keep the programs top notch and bring you the quality bonsai experiences we all want it will take us all pitching in, so don't be shy. Make yourself known to one of the board members and help us put on the quality programs you all want and deserve.

- Candace Key

### **A GENTLE REMINDER:**

If you have not already done so, it is time to renew your membership fees: Single \$45; Family \$65; Student \$25. Membership forms will be available at our next workshop and meeting. Checks are payable to the Marin Bonsai Club and must include your name, address and telephone number. It should be given to Frances Noles, our Treasurer.

It would be greatly appreciated if dues could be submitted promptly and no later than **March 31** to be included in our directory.

For the health of the Club, we need both your financial support and your physical effort. Thank you all.

Another great Shohin Seminar. My favorite workshop was by a tiny old Japanese lady, Mary Sakaishi, who did a workshop called Kusamono "Accent Planting". Mary was assisted by her daughters who had helped her prepare 10 boxes with containers, accent plants (all root trimmed and ready to plant), 2 kinds of orchid bulbs and a baggie full of damp premixed muck and there were flats of moss on the table. Mary showed us what to, how to do it and we were off...we all went home with 5 accent plants of different sizes (on a slab, in shallow dishes, in a small pot, and finally in a tiny barely 2" pot). It was great fun and I am happy to report that they are all doing well!!

- *Michaele Jaffe*

I looked forward to the Shohin convention and all of its workshops, vendors, and activities. It didn't disappoint me. Once again, our Club was well represented and we returned home full of more knowledge about shohin trees, displays, and, of course, bags of pots, future trees, and whatever purchases we just had to have.

I took Bob Hilvers' workshop on trident maple and was impressed with his conduct of the workshop—paying attention to every person and making sure everyone learned something from the trees he provided.

One great aspect of this convention is that we were able to walk around and be silent observers of the various workshops in action as people sat at round tables in one big space. And the instructors of these workshops were impressive as well: Kenji Miyata, Harry Hirao, Ted Matson—to name a few—and they all donated their services. The vendors had an extraordinary selection of beautiful pots. There were many demonstrations presented, some good, some not. It was great to be with other bonsaists from around the Bay Area and country; the camaraderie is heartwarming. Can't wait for the next one in two years.

- *Jeanette Arnold*

The most enjoyable part of Shohin for me was the opportunity to see so many stimulating presentations and workshops. I could take a lot of the new knowledge I gained and immediately use it on some newly purchased material as well as some of the trees I already had. Not only did I get timely information, I got some up-to-the-minute tips from some of the best sensei in the bonsai world. Definitely an event that's worth attending!

- *Alison Seaman*

This was my 4th Shohin Seminar and it lived up to its reputation. Great demos, workshops and exhibition. My favorite event is the Saturday night dinner where we really have a great time as a club. This event is not to be missed!

- *Craig Thompson*

As usual, going to the Shohin Seminar in Santa Nella was a happy weekend experience. I did have a lot of fun chatting with acquaintances I hadn't seen for a while. My workshop was A-one - a shohin pomegranate which had been growing in the field for over two years.

This year I concentrated on finding bonsai pots of useful sizes. Although I seem to collect pots in great numbers of all sizes and colors, they're never the right ones that I need. So - my great intention. I had good luck finding a few pots. However, once again, I came home with pots for which I will have to find trees instead of the other way around.

I'm so glad I went to the Seminar and am waiting for the next one in two years.

- *Frances Noles*

### California Shohin Society Seminar 2010

#### *Santa Nella sentiments...*

The Shohin Convention once again provided a little bonsai oasis in the

middle of nowhere, or rather Santa Nella. From the first demonstration with Ted Matson to the last with Kathy Shaner it was a total bonsai educational experience. I enjoyed the opportunity to shop with some of my favorite vendors for tools, trees and pots and of course rub elbows with some of the bonsai greats like Harry Hirao and Marty Mann. Before my afternoon class, I walked around to sample the instruction given during the morning session by some of the best instructors in the country. John Thompson's group worked on some beautiful Gold Cup oaks John grew from acorns, Valerie Monroe's class on hinoki cypress was fascinating and a pinch pot class taught by Jim Barrett produced some beautiful and unique pots. My own class in the afternoon started with a bit of frustration since I was unfamiliar with the shimpaku material we were working with, but with Valerie's expert guidance and the support of an optimistic sketch for my tree's future I finished the class with a promising bonsai which could be show-worthy in a couple of years. The Shohin Convention is one of the best educational opportunities in bonsai and we are so lucky to have it so close and accessible. Those who missed it this year should mark their calendars for 2012 and be sure to take in the next one.

- *Candace Key*



## RE-POTTING SEASON IS HERE!

Get your fresh Bonsai soil  
\$20.00 per Bucket

Contact Chris Ross or John Doig

### TASKMASTER – March 2010

The month of March, in the Northern California north bay microclimates, is a confusing and changeable time of spring-like days, winter-like nights, summer-like mornings, and autumn-like mid-afternoons, mixed together with varying amounts of rain, fog, chill, warmth and wind. Cool, warm, bright, dim, still, breezy, what's a bonsai artist to do? Well, I'll tell you what, and it's a lot. So put your gloves on and get ready, because around here, spring already got its head start and you've just got to catch up.

Any deciduous tree that still has few leaves or many buds must be repotted immediately. That window of opportunity is closing very fast. If you wait too late you may not kill the tree but the rate and type of growth of leaves, twigs, branches, and even roots are retarded for the whole year. If you think you've missed it, that there's already too many leaves, better just wait until next dormancy. Fruiting and/or flowering plants first, broadleaf plants second, broadleaf evergreens next, then spruce, fir, and cypress, then junipers. Pines get repotted in April-to-May when the candles and buds begin to move and lengthen. Waiting a bit on these creates shorter needle growth later.

Take off all old wire and start over. Leave wire off of deciduous plants for now, because the rapid growth will make it cut in quickly and the buds are easily destroyed now anyway.

Maples that put shoots out now must be pinched daily. Every second pair of leaves gets pinched off as it emerges beyond the first pair, unless the branch or twig needs to be longer; then it's the third leaf pair that gets pinched off. The branches will never properly ramify if you don't do this right. Elms and other alternate-leaf pattern trees get pinched off after the third leaf is set. No pinching at all on fruiting or flowering trees now. And any stem or branch that needs to be fatter should be left alone to grow wild for the time being.

Spray Malathion one week and Sevin the next in weakened solutions for the next six weeks. your trees have relatively few leaves compared to the numbers of bugs there are and how fast they regenerate, and every twig is precious, so be pre-emptive, be smart, kill 'em all before they get a grip.

It's time to put away the 0-10-10 for winter and dormant root growth in favor of a dose of half strength Miracle Gro followed two weeks later with cottonseed meal/bone meal (70%-30%) sprinkled around the outer half of the soil surface (2 Tbsp for medium pot 12x6", adjust according to size) and scratched in lightly with a chopstick. Remember that no plant gets fertilized for 4-5 weeks after repotting. Add some Osmocote in small amount to any soil being replaced or replenished now, particularly to the outside edges of any pot, and add a little bit of bone meal or pelletized bone meal to added soil or repotting soil to speed and strengthen new root growth.

Put everything in full sun and rotate everything every week or so. The rotation is perhaps more important now than at other times, because of bud development and strengthening.

That's not all, but it's enough to get the spring started off right.

Remember to treat each other like you're supposed to treat your sweet little trees, with careful forethought and studied respect and a hope for a long and happy relationship.

And if that doesn't work out, try 1 tsp of dish soap and 1/2 tsp baking soda in a sprayer with 2 cups of cold H2O squirted directly onto the nape of the neck.

- The Taskmaster

**Welcome  
to our newest member!**

***Janice Redenbarger  
Sausalito, CA***

## BAY AREA BONSAI EVENTS

**March 13-14** **Oakland, CA**  
Bay Area Bonsai Associates: 29th Annual Show, Lakeside Park Garden Center, 666 Bellevue Avenue. Hours are Saturday, 4:30PM-10PM, and Sunday, 10AM-4PM. Demonstration and critique illustrating design concepts by Dave DeGroot starts at 6PM, Saturday, followed by a raffle. The plant and pot sale, including related bonsai items (bonsai books, tools, etc.) is continuous both days. Admission is Free. For more information contact [Jeff@saber.net](mailto:Jeff@saber.net) or 707-984-8012

**March 20-21** **Palo Alto, CA**  
Kusamura Bonsai Club will hold its 50th Anniversary Show at Mitchell Park, 3800 Middlefield Road. Admission is free. There will be demonstrations, raffles, and club member tree sales both days. The theme of the show is "Our Oldest Tree" and will celebrate a founding sensei, Tosh Saburomaru and a unique display of legacy trees from our members. Guest demonstrator to be announced. For more information contact Jerry Carpenter at (H) 408-557-0166; (C) 408-823-9525 or [jcsf1090@comcast.net](mailto:jcsf1090@comcast.net)

**March 20-21** **Scotts Valley, CA**  
Santa Cruz Bonsai Kai presents its 21st annual show at the Scotts Valley Community Center, 360 Kings Village Road from 10:30AM-4:30 PM. Demonstration at 2PM on both days by Katsumi Kinoshita. Plant sales, door prizes, demonstration tree raffle and much more. For more information call 831-469-0688

**March 27-28** **San Jose, CA**  
San Jose Betsuin Bonsai Club: 40th Annual Bonsai Exhibit at the San Jose Betsuin Buddhist Church, 640 North 5th Street. Hours are Saturday, 12-4PM, and Sunday, 11AM-4PM. Demonstration at 1PM both days by Harry Hirao, aka "Mr. California Juniper" from Huntington Beach. Plant and vendor sales both days. Free admission. For more information, call Ken Azuma, 408-730-4506.

**April 3-4** **Sacramento, CA**  
Bonsai Sekiyu Kai: 33rd Annual Bonsai Show at the Sacramento Betsuin Buddhist Church, 2401 Riverside Boulevard. Show hours are Saturday, 12Noon-5PM, and Sunday, 10AM-3:30PM. Demonstration both days at 2PM by Bonsai Master John Uchida. Refreshments, door prizes, raffles, and sale of plants and bonsai tools. For additional information contact Ron Krause at 916-481-4792.

**April 17-18** **Hanford, CA**  
The Clark Center for Japanese Art and Culture Annual Spring Festival: featuring the Kazari 2010 Bonsai Display Competition. Location at 15770 Tenth Avenue. Two full days of bonsai art, featuring tea ceremonies, garden tours, lectures, seminars and a bazaar with art vendors, sale of bonsai items, food vendors and an after hours reception. Hours are Saturday, 10AM-5PM and Sunday, 10AM-3PM. Judged competition on the art of displaying bonsai with prizes of \$2500, \$1000, \$500. Kathy Shaner, Curator of the GSBF Bonsai Garden at Lake Merritt, will conduct a demonstration followed by an auction on Saturday, and a Tokoname display workshop on Sunday. Email or call Bob Hilvers, [bonsai@ccjac.org](mailto:bonsai@ccjac.org) or 559-909-1051, for further information.

**April 24-25** **Modesto, CA**  
Modesto Bonsai Club: 29th Annual Spring Show and Sale at the Modesto Centre Plaza, 11th & K Streets. Hours are Saturday, 10AM-5PM and Sunday, 11AM-4PM. Demonstrations, raffles, auctions and sales both days. Free Admission. For more information, call Peter Camarena at 209-324-9181 or visit us at [www.ModestoBonsaiClub.com](http://www.ModestoBonsaiClub.com)

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### Monthly Demo Meeting Refreshment Teams

**March** - *Frances Noles,  
Alison Seaman*

**April** - *Dan Keller,  
Emily Shibata*



Refreshment 'teams' bring what they like, but enough quantity between them to provide for 10-15 people. Beverages, cookies, Bundt cake, fruit, crackers with a spread, or whatever else may inspire. The club supplies paper supplies, coffee and tea to complement your efforts.

Two more volunteers are needed to bring something on June 15<sup>th</sup> (last meeting before the fair). Please contact Marlene Philley to advise: [mkphilley@earthlink.net](mailto:mkphilley@earthlink.net).

Thank you.

## MARIN BONSAI CLUB EVENTS

### March 2, 2010: 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.

### March 16, 2010: The Taskmaster

A presentation on horticulture and bonsai by our very own Taskmaster. Bring your pen and notebook!

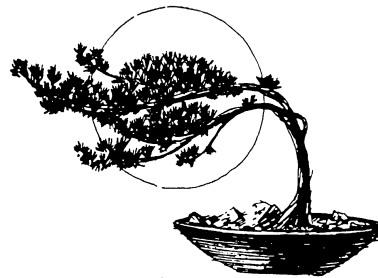
### April 6, 2010: Workshop

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.

### April 20, 2010: Satsuki Azaleas

Darren and Laura Wong talking about satsuki azaleas and their experiences studying in Japan.

For a full list of currently scheduled MBC events, see <http://www.marinbonsai.org/events/index.php>.



Marin Bonsai Club

### 2010 Marin Bonsai Club Officers:

President	Alison Seaman	415-789-1167
VP Programs	Candace Key	415-491-1989
VP Shows	Jay McDonald	415-847-8909
Secretary	Jeanette Arnold	415-883-2651
Treasurer	Frances Noles	415-461-0437
Historian	Carolyn Robbins	415-460-0339
Librarian	Karen Stagg	415-897-6824
News Editor	Sharon Bone	415-898-9618
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](http://www.marinbonsai.org)

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