



# 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

May 2009

### Marin County Fair

Are your trees ready for the Marin County Fair Show, July 1-5? Have you been reducing the size of the leaves? Did you repot into a good pot this winter? Have you been working to ramify those branches and refine the styling? Are you keeping up with the fertilizer and pest abatement practices? I didn't think so . . . but don't worry, it may not be too late to get your trees ready for the show. To get an expert opinion on what you need to do for your trees to bring them into show-worthy shape, bring them to the May and June workshops to review with our sensei Tim Kong and Jay McDonald. They will help you focus your efforts and hopefully bring your trees around in time for the show.

We would love to see as many members as possible exhibit their trees this year. Of course not everyone lives to show off their trees, but the exercise of preparing a tree for display, making sure it looks its very best, is great bonsai training even if you only show off to your friends in your own backyard. It is a challenge to pull all the elements of form, training, good health and presentation together at that moment in time when it is perfect for the show, but one that perhaps lets you see your tree in a fresh light, appreciating it all the more. Hopefully many of you will rise to the challenge and we'll see a strong and diverse member turn out of trees for the show.

This isn't to say all our trees are ready for the spotlight in the main exhibition. Unfortunately there isn't room for a 'Trees in Training' display in the main Exhibition Hall, but there is the alternative of showing trees in the judged section of the fair. Here you can enter as many trees as you like in a variety of categories with the possibility of winning cash prizes. These trees don't necessarily need to be in pluperfect shape, although the better trees do get

more recognition. Give this some thought as well when preparing your trees for show. Both opportunities provide great incentive to work intensely with your trees and make them better as well as developing your skills. Now go out and get busy!

- Candace Key



### A Call for Tools

Our youngest club members, Brian Whitelaw McDonald and Ian Shapiro will be conducting a bonsai class at their school, the Lycee Francais La Perouse of Corte Madera, and are asking for help in rounding up enough tools for the participants to use. If you have older scissors and could donate or lend them to the cause they would be most grateful. If they are dull perhaps you could give them a new edge before passing them along. All lent tools will be returned immediately (the June workshop).

It is terrific to see such enthusiasm and focus from our young bonsai practitioners and if we can support them in spreading the love for our little trees that seems like a very good thing!

***Please bring whatever you can donate to the May workshop, or give them to another member to bring in if you can't be there yourself.***

## Taskmaster - May 2009

And so May comes to Northern San Francisco Bay Area micro-climates after a relatively dry April this year and a mini heat wave; many plants are slightly stressed and showing lots of new growth. This means lots of opportunistic bugs, and we must gird our loins for battle.

Systemic sprays and soil additives are ecologically relatively safe on bonsai that do not flower, because they're too small for much bird notice and the bees and such leave them alone. So Green Light™, Sevin™, and the Carbaryl insecticides are OK on them. For flowering plants a hard spray of water, Safer Soap, and finger picking are best. We need those bees to be healthy! May means full-on fertilizer applied weakly weekly for the next 4-6 weeks. Choose what you like but get it done now. Half strength Miracle Gro™, Bloom™, and other soluble products for the watering can, or Osmocote™ or its competitors (Jim Gremel says Apex™ is the best one, but hard to find in small quantities) or rapeseed cakes are all good. 70% cottonseed meal and 30% bone meal mix sprinkled around the outside 1-2 inches of soil and scratched in tends to promise healthy trees, shorter internodes and better fall color than most other methods, and this method can be used every 4-6 weeks year round on evergreens.

Keep pinching back evergreens to shape foliage pads, reduce leggy growth, and create lush back budding. Defoliate individual areas, largest leaf growth, or entire trees if they're very vigorous and healthy. Note, however, that fruiting and flowering trees form next year's blooms on this year's new growth, so leave them alone. Only prune and reshape them every 3 or 4 years, sacrificing only one year of heavy bloom-and-bud. Make sure nothing dries out right now. Even a few hours spent too dry will cause fruit drop and blossom failure later on. And cuttings and grafts give up quickly if dry for a day.

Candle removal on pines is the job everyone gets confused about. The rule is mid-May to end of June, cut them back in ascending order. Lowest, weakest candles first, middle layers ten days later, top and strongest candles in ten more days. And May means trim, prune and repot azaleas when most blooming is finished. Cover new soil with coarse chopped peat moss and leave in bright or dappled shade for 6 weeks.

Air layers in May work better than any other time. And air layering can turn an awkward tree into a real beauty or, occasionally, two beauties! By September or so you'll have a little warm weather left for the new roots to become established in a new pot.

May is the month of creation. The trees are creating fruit for fall and buds for next spring, wet new growth for summer photosynthesis, and new strength and thickness in roots, trunks and branches to demonstrate maturity and dominance. The bees are creating honey and hive to make it all keep happening. The bugs are creating a nuisance. The birds are creating the songs that keep the world turning. The sun and wind and earth are pumping the magic they create together through everything. And you, nurturer, gardener, careful grower, you, sweetheart, create the dreams of the future. Dream big. Create only good ones.

- The Taskmaster

**Welcome to our newest members!**

*Barrett Lehnert - Mill Valley*  
*Rev Marilyn-Eileen Chung - Mill Valley*

## Field Trip to Placerville Reminder

Saturday, May 16. We usually have about ten people (but would welcome more) and we carpool. We leave Marin about 8am and get up there about 10ish, returning to Marin at around 5-6pm.

We plan to go to Lotus Bonsai, El Dorado (now known as Enchanted Gardens Nursery), and the plantation of Greg McDonald (Jay's brother). We may stop at Muriyama Nursery in Sacramento depending on our time.

We bring our own lunches and have a couple of great possibilities for our picnic lunch.

Please call Michael at 945-9930 with questions. The signup list will be out at the May workshop.

## Bonsai in Bali

The Indonesian island of Bali is one of the world's most beautiful places. With gorgeous landscapes of rice terraces, volcanoes and temples, tourists have been drawn to this exotic locale for a hundred years. For the regular tourist it is known more for its white sandy beaches, friendly people and unique Hindu culture. Amy and I went there on our honeymoon in 2005 and had gone back twice before I found bonsai heaven on a tourist beach in south Bali; the Bonsai Café.

To most tourists who visit the Bonsai Café, it is a nice restaurant on Sanur Beach with about 5 or 6 large bonsai trees on stands between the tables. But venture to the back garden and you'll find some of the most beautiful bonsai anywhere.

I Wayan Jelantik Yana has been doing bonsai for over 20 years. He and his partner, I Made (pronounced Maday) Suadnyana, and a few friends spend 6 to 8 hours a day in the bonsai garden behind the restaurant working on trees. When we went there, Wayan and his friends were wiring a small ficus. There are many individual bonsai stands in the garden, each topped with a beautiful tree. Around the sides of the garden are benches with trees they are developing, and many shohin size trees. I have no idea how many trees he has, but there must be several hundred in all with over a hundred specimen trees.

There are several kinds of bonsai; ficus, pines and other local trees, but the main species they work on is *Pemphis acidula* (called Santigi in Bali), a tree that grows wild all over Indonesia. Wayan and his friends have scoured the hills and coastlines of Bali finding some amazing yamadori *Pemphis*. What has come out of this are bonsai that would be welcome in any great collection or show in the world.

These yamadori *Pemphis* have incredible trunks, with lots of deadwood and twists and turns, much like our native junipers in California. They have very small leaves, similar to an olive, that are perfect for bonsai. They must be quite old, by the looks of the trees, but it's hard to say since everything here in the tropics grows fast.

I have included some pictures here so you get an idea of the great bonsai artistry that lives on the island of Bali. Bali is a great place to visit for its unique landscape, people and culture, but there is an added incentive for bonsai folks. A visit to the Bonsai Café is truly an inspiring experience.

- Craig Thompson



*At the entrance to the Bonsai Cafe with our driver, Made*



*Pemphis acidula*



*Wayan and me with one of his prized Pemphis*

## May Meeting

Marin Bonsai Club is pleased to host Bob Gould at our May meeting. Bob, a frequent and popular speaker at the club, brings a wealth of knowledge about many aspects of bonsai he has learned in decades of practice and study. Bob plays an instrumental part in keeping the Collection North Bonsai Garden going and is an active member of the East Bay Bonsai Club, the Suiseki Club and the Bay Area Satsuki Aikokai.

For this meeting Bob will be sharing his expertise on Satsuki Azaleas. These trees, or shrubs, have their own set of demands and styling techniques and Bob will discuss styling, caring for and appreciating these beautiful trees. If you haven't been tempted to add azaleas to your collection yet perhaps Bob will convince you that with just a little special care these beautiful bonsai should have a place in your own garden. Even if you don't have room for keeping your own azaleas, Bob's discussion will give you a better understanding of what makes a good azalea bonsai and a broader appreciation of these trees so highly revered by Japanese bonsai practitioners and the public alike.

And, just by coincidence . . . Fellow Bay Area Satsuki Aikokai member Ruben Guzman will be having his annual spring plant sale on Saturday May 23 and Saturday June 6. Ruben excels in raising amazing azaleas, but has many other beautiful trees for sale as well. This is a terrific acquisition opportunity for anyone interested in finding quality trees. The hours are 9am-3pm both days. Ruben's house is located in Danville. Maps and directions will be available at our May workshop and meeting, or by calling Ruben at 925.837.7804.

- Candace Key

## BAY AREA BONSAI EVENTS

### May 2 Ross, CA

Marin Art & Garden Center – MAGC Spring Garden Festival. 10am-5pm. Music, plants, art, crafts, antiques and other treasures for sale, food and wine, entertainment, lectures and hands-on demonstrations. Marin Bonsai Club will display and sell bonsai. \$5 adults/\$3 seniors and children 8+ /free for children 7 and under. 30 Sir Francis Drake. 415.455.5260 [www.magc.org](http://www.magc.org)

### May 2-3 Sacramento, CA

Sacramento Bonsai Club: 63rd Annual Bonsai and Suiseki Show at the Sacramento Buddhist Church, 2401 Riverside Blvd. Show hours are Saturday, 12noon-5PM and Sunday, 10AM-4PM. Demonstration by Boon Manakitivipart at 2PM, both days. Raffle will follow. Free admission. Plants and bonsai related items for sale. For further information contact Gary Judd 916-630-1340.

### 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](mailto:bonsai@ccjac.org). 15770 Tenth Avenue, Hanford, CA. Phone 559-582-4915. [www.ccjac.org](http://www.ccjac.org)

### 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](mailto: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.

Please send newsletter submissions (articles, notices, photos, whatever) to: Sharon Bone, [sbone27@comcast.net](mailto:sbone27@comcast.net). Deadline for inclusion in the June 2009 issue is May 20.

## Cherry Blossom Festival

It was a beautiful weekend and the suiseki group plus five Bay Area bonsai clubs displayed gorgeous trees in a large room in the Miyako Mall on Saturday and Sunday, April 18 and 19. The Marin Bonsai Club was lucky enough to pick the "right number" and we were situated along the glass window nearest the door entry from the mall where people were enticed to come in and view all the displays. Approximately 5,000 people came through the doors on both days; all were impressed and very complimentary. Tim Kong did a demo on a boxwood on Saturday and John Edwards worked on a juniper on Sunday.

Each club had four tables to exhibit trees. Rumor had it that the Marin Bonsai Club's display had the best variety and sizes of trees. And the accents looked good, too!

Our Club also deserves kudos for being the only club to provide docents and assistance on both days. We thank Jay, Candace, Chris, Roger, Marlene, John, and Jeanette for their time and labor. And, of course, the show cannot go on without Tim and Emma's contribution. John Edwards (BSSF) did an extraordinary job in organizing and coordinating this event.

When not "working," we had time to check out the vendors and eat some tasty morsels. It was also fun tasting free sake, learning about aojiru (barley drink good for your health) and going into the many shops in Japantown—especially Kinokuniya Bookstore, Soko Hardware and the infamous Ichiban. It sells just about everything, as Chris Ross well knows. Instead of winning the raffle, Chris returns with bags and bags of stuff--it's Christmas again! But, it's cherry blossom time and if only we were surrounded by the beautiful pink and white flowers and watch the petals fall to the ground. Let's hope we can have this experience next year as well.

- Jeanette Arnold

*The unsung heroine of this story is our own Jeanette Arnold who worked tirelessly along side John Edwards to help set up and take down the show as well as coordinate our involvement. It is due to her energy and patience that the Marin Bonsai Club presented such a professional and beautiful display for the crowds at the Cherry Blossom Festival. We all owe her a huge debt of gratitude. It is an honor for the club to be invited to participate and that wouldn't have been possible without Jeanette.*

- Candace Key



*Jay McDonald and John Edwards, who coordinated the 5 bonsai clubs involvement in the festival, get a few minutes to relax at the Cherry Blossom Festival.*



*Candace Key explains some of the finer points of bonsai appreciation to visitors to the Cherry Blossom bonsai exhibit.*

## MARIN BONSAI CLUB EVENTS

### May 5, 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.

### May 19, 2009: Demonstration

Tuesday, 7:30pm Livermore Room

Bob Gould demo on azaleas.

*Emily Shibata and Roger Lion will provide refreshments.*

### June 2, 2009: Workshop

Tuesday, 7pm Livermore Room

Our monthly bring-your-own-tree workshop with Tim Kong and Jay McDonald. Fee is \$10 for members, \$20 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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