

MARIN BONSAI CLUB

December Newsletter – 2021

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2022 MBC ELECTIONS

For all MBC members, this is an appeal for your vote in the 2022 MBC elections due no later than December 15, 2021. However, you can cast your vote now by replying to this email: info@marinbonsai.org.

A YES vote elects all nominations, as listed below.

A NO vote rejects all nominations, as listed below.

You must be a member in good standing to vote.

The MBC Board has approved the following nominations, to date. You still have time to nominate someone as an officer or board director. If you nominate someone other than yourself, please be sure the member is willing to serve. ■

2022 OFFICER AND BOARD DIRECTOR NOMINATIONS

Tung Dao	President
Marcia Summers	Treasurer
Brendan Crotty	Secretary
Daniel Keller	Director
Gwynessa Aetherwyn	Director
Diane Matzen	Director

2022 MBC MEMBERSHIP DUES

The club will start collecting membership dues in January 2022. Dues

GET TO KNOW YOUR NOMINATED OFFICERS AND DIRECTORS



TUNG DAO

Title
President
MBC Member
1st year
Bonsai Hobby
10 years
Skill Level
Intermediate
Appointment
Newsletter Editor



MARCIA SUMMERS

Title
Treasurer
MBC Member
7 years
Bonsai Hobby
18 years
Skill Level
Intermediate
Favorite Tree
Chinese Quince & Olive



BRENDAN CROTTY

Title
Secretary
MBC Member
1st year
Bonsai Hobby
5 years
Skill Level
Intermediate
Favorite Tree
Coastal Redwood



DANIEL KELLER

Title
Director
MBC Member
12 years
Bonsai Hobby
36 years
Skill Level
Advanced
Intermediate
Appointment
Membership



GWYNESSA AETHERWYN

Title
Director
MBC Member
3 years
Bonsai Hobby
3+ years
Skill Level
Intermediate
Favorite Tree
Oak



DIANE MATZEN

Title
Director
MBC Member
1.5 years
Bonsai Hobby
1.5 years
Skill Level
Beginner
Favorite Tree
All Species

are considered a critical source of revenue for the club to pay its bills. There won't be any other sources of revenue until MBC obtains full compliance from the State, Federal IRS and City for nonprofit corporation 501 (c)(3) tax exemption later in the new year.

Membership dues remain the same rates: \$45 single, \$65 family and \$25 student.

Make check payable to Marin Bonsai Club, and mail to Marin Bonsai Club, PO Box 1461, Ross, CA 94957-1461. Or you can hand check over to Marcia Summers, Club Treasurer, at the first meeting/demonstration on Tuesday evening, January 4, 2022, at Room #4, Terra Linda Community Center, San Rafael.

Early payment is greatly appreciated. Thank you. ■

2022 MBC SCHEDULE OF ACTIVITIES

REPOTTING DEMO WITH VALERIE MONROE

TUESDAY, JANUARY 4, 2022

7:00-9:30 P.M.

TERRA LINDA COMMUNITY CENTER (TLCC) ROOM #4

670 DEL GANADO ROAD
SAN RAFAEL, CA 94903

Guest Artist/Instructor Valerie Monroe will kick off the new year with a demonstration on the complete steps in repotting bonsai. Valerie will be working with an olive bonsai. There will be a raffle upon completion of the demonstration. If there is time Valerie



Valerie Monroe is a past president of the Sei Boku Bonsai Kai of Foster City, CA.

will take questions on member trees and pot selection.

The following member repotting workshops are routine for the winter months of January and February. The club furnishes bonsai soil mixes and aluminum wire. In the past MBC charged \$5 and \$10 for soil to accommodate small and large repotting. This year a donation will be appreciated.

Stay tuned for instructions on how to RSVP.

TUESDAY, JANUARY 18, 2022

7:00-9:30 P.M.

TLCC ROOM #4

670 DEL GANADO ROAD
SAN RAFAEL, CA 94903

Members repotting workshop. Limit eight members per workshop.

TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 1, 2022

7:00-9:30 P.M.

TLCC ROOM #4

Members repotting workshop. Limit eight members per workshop.

TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 15, 2022

7:00-9:30 P.M.

TLCC ROOM #4

Members repotting workshop. Limit eight members per workshop. ■

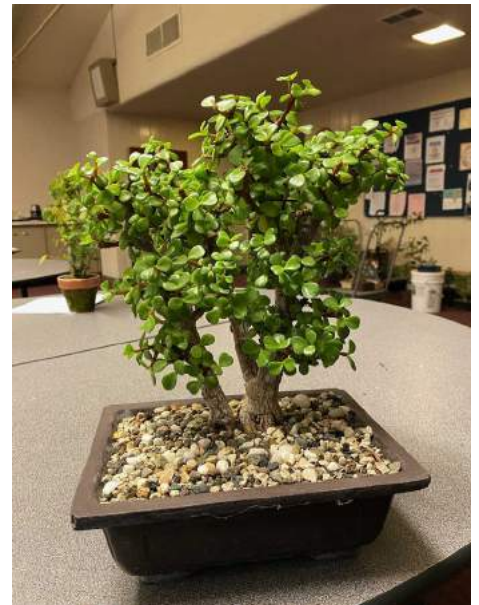
ROPE 'EM IN WITH JADE PLANT

STORY AND IMAGES

BY TUNG X. DAO

A friend of mine decides one day to get into bonsai. She had seen my bonsai collection and was quite impressed. The Midori Silent Auction is coming up, so I tell her that this would be a great opportunity to get some starter material. She is ecstatic at the chance to get into bonsai.

I ask a little bit about her gardening experience. She says she is just starting out; it's something she wished she knew more about. She has some succulents and that was all she could keep alive. I ask if she will be able to water a bonsai tree every day.



The *P. afra* I got for my friend from the Silent Auction.

"No, I travel for a week from time to time, and I don't have anyone to water for me." I cross off a lot of trees in my head. I ask about tools. Nope, nothing beyond a basic garden shear, if even that. Wire? Hah! As you can tell, she is very new to this.

"Ok, great! I'll see what I can find for you." Oh boy, what did I get myself into?

As luck would have it, I find the perfect tree for her at the auction — much thanks to Elliott! He brought in a wonderful selection of jades (specifically *Portulacaria afra*, or dwarf jade). One of them is even already on its way to becoming a nice tree. I give my friend this one, and I decide to keep the other ones for my own collection.

AN EXCELLENT BEGINNER'S TREE

Crassula ovata (jade plant) and *P. afra* (dwarf jade plant) are succulents from South Africa commonly grown in both indoor and outdoor settings. They have smooth oval leaves that grow in pairs on the stem. The leaves can turn red under the right conditions. They also create beautiful white and/or pink flowers.

Experienced bonsai practitioners know the difficulty of the maintenance and upkeep that we put into our trees. They're babies that can't tell you if something is wrong. It would be so disheartening to a beginner to have to



A jade plant group planting shows the dense foliage that is possible with a little training.



Jade plant can tolerate a wide amount of watering.

undertake a huge responsibility with so little experience, only to have the tree die.

While the tree I got for my friend is a *P. afra* (dwarf jade with small succulent leaves), I primarily grow *C. ovata* (the larger leafed cousin) and will be discussing about why these make excellent beginner trees. They have very forgiving watering requirements, are very easy to prune, tolerate a wide range of lighting, and lend themselves very well to training. I believe the reasons do carry over quite well to *P. afra* — just keep in mind that my experience comes mainly from growing crassula-type jades.

Because of the easy care requirements, I think jade plant is possibly an even better beginner's bonsai tree than a juniper mallsai. We are all familiar with these. They have skinny trunks and can be found at any garden center — or shopping malls. It is not to say that we should eschew mallsai; they are responsible for a lot of laypeople getting into bonsai and [should be celebrated](#)¹ in their own right.

WATERING

For a beginner, the watering requirements don't get easier than jade. It can tolerate everything from just rain water in the winter to being watered like any other bonsai. In my garden, I water my jades the same as I would my other trees. I've also seen jades that get neglected except for when the rain pours in the winter. Both do fine. In fact, the neglected one displayed more color in the form of red stripes on the leaves.

I grow mine in regular bonsai mix, but I've seen it growing in all sorts of different soils — from potting mix to ground soil to other esoteric mixes. You definitely don't want the water to collect and rot the roots away, so make sure the pot has a hole.

Because of this, people who haven't gotten into — or can't do — the proper routine of checking every day and watering as needed can have a better chance at keeping something alive.

¹ Heath, Will. *In Defense of the Mallsai*. artofbonsai.org. 2005 Jan 29.



Jade plant easily and predictably back-buds with pruning. If the plant is left outdoors for the winter, don't prune in the fall before the rain comes, however, because the wounds can rot.



This single trunk jade plant needed an emergency repot due to wind damage. It is in the process of light wiring after pruning.

PRUNING

Jade lends itself well to pruning. Or not pruning. You can prune it a lot, or not at all. You've probably seen jade bushes that grow in front yards with minimal work. They grow into compact bushes with lots of ramification and thick trunks. I often see them in pots outdoors. They do tend to get a little leggy and sparse in these situations.

That's ok, because pruning doesn't require any special tools. And because they're succulents, you could use household scissors and cut right through the soft branches. If you're a beginner and have no tools yet, this is great. (Please do get proper tools once you really get into this hobby, of course!)

Another great thing about pruning jades is that they back-bud very reliably and predictably. Wherever I prune, I can almost always expect two buds to pop out at the cut. Developing ramification is not an issue with jade.

LIGHTING

Jade can grow anywhere that the temperature doesn't drop much below freezing. Ideally, they would be grown in as much sunlight outdoors as they can get (except in very hot climates). This leads to very vigorous and dense growth. However, if all you have is a table indoors, it'll grow there too. It's as though it doesn't care!

Of course, it's not as ideal to grow in very low light conditions. It tends to get leggy if left unpruned indoors.

THEY LOOK NICE

Content warning — falling trees and broken pots!

I currently have a jade in development indoors. It was originally in a terra cotta pot with an inappropriately small base. Of course, it fell over in the wind and broke the pot, requiring an emergency repot. A few branches also got broken off. As a result, I had to repot it into a proper bonsai pot and let it heal indoors. If left outside, the constant moisture from the rain will cause the cuts to rot and branches will be lost. I know this from experience on another jade. After repotting, it's been sitting inside for a few weeks now. I wired and pruned it since it will be indoors for the winter. Only a week or so later, the cuts are popping out new buds everywhere.



The bark can become flaky and aged if there is vigorous growth.

Some important qualities that we look for in bonsai material are trunk size, trunk character, and good nebari. I think jade fulfills these requirements to a pretty good extent. It may be an unconventional species for bonsai, but

it exhibits these desirable qualities. Plus, as a bonus, it's great for anyone, including beginners, who wants a forgiving tree to take care of.

There's a certain thing to be said for size. Bigger trees tend to be easier

to take care of. Jades with thick trunks are easy to come by. If you can't find one, they grow thick pretty quickly from a cutting (which can be thick already). Or even a leaf. Just let it grow undisturbed for a few years and they should thicken fast.

They can be grown in many of the classical styles. I have a large group planting, a single trunk informal upright, and a mame size group planting. Some of the weird skinny ones I've seen outside dental offices would make interesting literati style. I've seen really fat trunks growing in my neighbors' yards. I can tell they do practically nothing to maintain them, and — with a little bit of training — would make wonderful trees.

The bark does get very interesting. My group planting jade's bark is starting to split as the trunk and branches get fatter. For *P. afra*, the bark is naturally more wrinkly, adding to the aged appearance. This is in contrast to crassulas which usually tend to have a younger, smoother bark.



Jade plant can be grown in a variety of styles and sizes. Here, a mame forest planting is shown with the larger group planting in the background

"JADE MAY BE AN UNCONVENTIONAL SPECIES FOR BONSAI, BUT IT EXHIBITS MANY DESIRABLE QUALITIES FOR BONSAI!"

The nebari can be quite nice. Jade does make a good nebari when it's trained to do so. Just do the same as you would for a normal bonsai.

All things considered, I think we have a great beginner's tree. It's easy to water for a wide variety of schedules, it's easy to maintain and develop, and once you train it you get a handsome tree with a lot of the distinguishing features that make a bonsai. If you know someone who wants to get into bonsai, but doesn't have the skills, tools, or ability to fully commit to the rigors of traditional bonsai, consider giving them a jade. Hopefully, this will become that seminal event that sparks the fire that leads them into the world of bonsai. ■

UPCOMING BONSAI EVENTS

EAST BAY BONSAI SOCIETY BONSAI SALE

SATURDAY, JANUARY 8TH

10:00 AM - 3:00 PM

OAKLAND LAKESIDE

GARDEN CENTER

666 BELLEVUE AVENUE, OAKLAND, CALIFORNIA

Join us for our in-person January 2022 club sale! The East Bay Bonsai Society will be holding a one-day bonsai sale on Saturday, January 8th, 2022 from 10am to 3pm at the Lakeside Garden Center in Oakland, California.

The sale will include established and starter bonsai trees, pots, tools, etc. Masks are required. Credit cards, checks, and cash accepted. Sales tax will be added to purchases.

Point of Contact is Lisa Harper at lisaharper@me.com

18TH BIENNIAL SHOHIN SEMINAR

DETAILS

Registration begins on **November 1, 2021**. The event will be on **February 4, 5, and 6, 2022** at **Hotel Mission de Oro**, 13070 Hwy 33, Santa Nella, California 95322. Please be sure and mention you are making a reservation for the Shohin Seminar to receive our discount.

Contact the hotel at 800-546-5697 or 209-826-4444 for Direct Hotel Reservations. Place your reservation early.

SUMMARY

The only event of its kind in the U.S. Every two years the California Shohin Society organizes a Shohin Seminar in Santa Nella, California, where bonsai masters, teachers, students, and general enthusiasts from all over the country gather to learn and share their love of Shohin bonsai.

The Shohin Seminar is considered to be one of the best, if not the best, opportunity in the U.S. to learn about Shohin. Thanks to the generosity of all who participate, it is an exceptional value for the cost.

ABOUT

About the Golden State Bonsai Federation (GSBF) Collections. Currently, the GSBF maintains three collections in California at the following locations:

- The Bonsai Garden at Lake Merritt in Oakland, CA
- The GSBF Collection at The Huntington in San Marino, CA
- Clark Bonsai Collection at Shinze in Fresno, CA

Proceeds from the Shohin Seminar will go to the three gardens. Visit the Shohin Seminar 2022 website <http://www.calshohin.org/>.

21ST ANNUAL MAMMOTH AUCTION AND SALE

FEBRUARY 19 AND 20, 2022
OAKLAND, CALIFORNIA

The annual Bonsai Garden at Lake Merritt Mammoth Auction and Sale will be held on **Saturday, February 19 and Sunday, February 20, 2022** at 666

Bellevue Ave., Lakeside Park Garden Center in Oakland. You are invited to the biggest auction and sale of bonsai, pre-bonsai, pots, books, stands, and related material. A Mammoth fundraiser with all proceeds going to support the Bonsai Garden at Lake Merritt (BGLM).

Saturday auction preview starts at 12:00 p.m. with auction starting at 1:00 p.m. Sunday sale from 9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m., large showing of vendors, plant sales, and much more. Purchase your bonsai needs. For further information, contact George Haas at gwhaas@comcast.net or stay tuned to the BGLM Website www.bonsailakemerritt.com.

Auction bonsai and items are now being collected at BGLM. Volunteers in all areas are requested to contact George Haas for leader assignments. ■

Background image: Colorado aspens showing off their fall colors. (Photo by Tung X. Dao)

2021 BOARD MEMBERS AND APPOINTMENTS

Please step up for any open positions available.

OFFICERS & BOARD MEMBERS

President	George Haas
Vice President	Open
Secretary	Marcia Summers
Treasurer	Marcia Summers
Current Board Members	Dan Keller Diane Matzen Gwynessa Aetherwyn Brendan Crotty Open

APPOINTMENTS

Membership	Dan Keller
Webmaster	Sharon Bone
Newsletter	Tung Dao
BGLM Docent Coordinator	Dennis Plaut
Program Chair	David Eichhorn
Show Chair	Jay McDonald

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