



Bonsai Wire Marin Bonsai Club

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

December 2014

From the President...

Hello Tree Shepherds,

Happy Holiday's to you all.

I hope some of you made the convention in Sacramento over Halloween weekend.

I hope most of you will attend the Christmas party this year. If not, seasons greetings. Tis' the season for giving. Taking comes in some other season, I forget which one.

Anyway, Let's keep our hearts open to the curious bonsai adventurer, the drop in guest and the second year lacking confidence artist. This bonsai stuff is best treated as a team sport and for many of us the fundamentals aren't engrained yet.

Be patient, encouraging and remember we learn at different speeds and through different angles of teaching. Together we are stronger.

With that I say,
Merry Christmas

Tim Burke

From the VP of Programs...

The Marin Bonsai Club's current educational series has been quite the crowd pleaser this Fall. We've had an accomplished bonsai professional speak to us every month since September, helping us reach a common, elevated ground of understanding, and stimulating some lively discussions.

Early in November we received the second of Peter Tea's series of four talks, wherein he started to delve into some of the practical applications of the theoretical framework he began in September. If I were to try to title the talk, I would call it: "When and why it matters when you do something to your tree, or: Why Peter Tea's earliest students should not have listened to him." The second part is a nod to a sort of running joke that Peter wound throughout his talk. While discussing how to time certain activities in bonsai, like potting, pruning and fertilizing, Peter warned against being too rigid, using himself as an example of someone who in the past might have imposed too many absolutes while trying to teach bonsai. In both his talk and in the latest highly informative handout (which he says is available if you ask him via e-mail), Peter repeatedly urged us to think before applying any particular guideline to the care of our trees. Much of what his lecture series is about is teaching us to consider more of the variables that affect such decisions as the timing of our techniques.

VP Programs Continued...

Late Fall pruning and mid-Winter repotting were two examples Peter gave of bonsai techniques that are done outside the “normal” windows of opportunity for such things. Late Fall pruning was a timely topic because in our climate it can be done to deciduous trees right now. Peter said it’s all well and good to play it conservative and wait to prune when the tree awakens in the Spring, but if you really want to get a jump on the upcoming season, and you happen to live in a climate like ours that stays warm late into Fall, then you can do one last prune on deciduous trees like maples and elms right before they go dormant. Timing is essential because too early and you’ll cause the nearby buds to pop open, too late and the wounds will bleed unusually long because a dormant tree doesn’t carry sap away from a wound, which bleeds through sheer unchecked capillary flow. So why take the risk? What is the advantage to pre-dormancy pruning? The tree gets the signal to divide and/or back-bud, but saves that activity for the next season, doing it immediately out of dormancy rather than having to wait until after a Spring cut. I know I am going to try this at least a little this Fall because I have seen adventitious back buds in the Fall that were abandoned in the Spring in favor of unchecked top growth.

Repotting earlier in Winter is another technique Peter mentioned that challenges the norm but can potentially give you many more weeks of vigorous growth earlier in the season. Again because we live in a relatively warm climate, with rare frosts late in Winter, we can repot our trees as early as late December. This gives the roots, which are never completely dormant, several more weeks to establish themselves before the tree awakens in the Spring. One caveat: do not prune the roots too heavily if you repot in the middle of Winter. They’re not

active enough to recover from severe hacking and will rot. And as always, use sharp shears to avoid unnecessary bruising.

Peter also told us his preferred soil mixture — 50% Akadama, 25% lava, and 25% pumice for conifers and evergreens, 75% Akadama and the other 25% split between lava and pumice for deciduous, tropicals, oaks, and redwoods — but then of course he said that it still depends on various factors that make it less simple than that. No doubt we will learn more of these factors and how they pertain to other aspects of bonsai when Peter returns to us April 21st.

Until then, we will have a lot going on after our little Holiday hiatus. Nothing has been set in stone for next year, but if it starts like this year, we’ll probably swap the January meeting and workshop days so that we can have a repotting demo early in the month and then have our repotting trifecta with the second meeting day of January and both of the days in February. More details in the December newsletter.

It is my understanding that we will be utilizing the Marin Society of Artists (MSA) building for our repotting meetings next year. To remind everybody, the MSA building is still on the Marin Art & Garden Center grounds, it’s simply to the right after the gates rather than to the left.

Don’t forget about the Christmas party on Sunday, December 7th, at Roger Lion’s house. See you there!

David Eichhorn

Dear Marin Bonsai Club Members

This special notice is being sent to remind you that we are looking forward very much to our Club's Holiday Party this year on Sunday, December 7th, and hope you will be able to attend. There will be food, contests, prizes, and lots of good cheer. This is a rare chance for all of us to just relax and socialize together, without other bonsai-work-related goals to interfere. We will gather at 2:00 P.M. and probably end around 6:00 P.M.

Again this year, it will be held at the lovely, festively decorated home of Roger Lion and Marlene Philley, with their "wrap-around" display of great bonsai outside the dining and living room windows. The Club currently has, and will provide, six bottles of white and four bottles of red wine for us all to enjoy until they are consumed; (of course, members are welcome to bring more wine; there happens to be a very convenient market across the street.) The Club will also provide the main courses, salmon, and a ham or turkey. We members supply the side dishes, that is: appetizers, side dishes, salads, and desserts. Please RSVP: email me, Dan Keller, (stwetch@gmail.com) and let me know what you are planning to bring in the way of a side dish. And if you want to drink something other than wine, you will need to bring it.

It has been a long tradition that we have a contest where we get to let our imaginations run wild decorating one of our own bonsai trees, then bringing it to the party for judging and voting on by all members. There will be three great prizes for the most inspired creations, so start planning now and join us in the Tree Decorating Contest.

Finally, you don't have to enter the Tree Decorating Contest in order to be admitted to the party. Just bring yourself, your partner if you

like, and a side dish. See you there. Don't worry if you don't already know where Roger & Marlene live, I will be sending directions to everybody who sends me an RSVP. Also, if you have any other questions, please don't hesitate to ask.

Warmly,

Dan Keller
415-246-9489



The Taskmaster, December 2014

December in the Northern Bay Area microclimates is an uncertain time. cold or even frosty nights can easily be followed by afternoons of sixty five or so degrees, and then the next three days could be rain. You just never know. But the truth is that it doesn't matter. In your well-ordered garden world, you will be ready for whatever comes. Here's how.

Our relatively warmer Winters means the trees never really stop growing. They may slow to a crawl, but during periods when the soil temperature warms a bit the roots grow a bit and the branches and trunks thicken a little. This means two major things: Number one is that the trees can be fertilized on a regular schedule and it just might do them some good come Spring. Big debates in some quarters about this, but many growers in mediterranean climates use an organic fertilizer (most of which are naturally slow-release substances) with low nitrogen (all numbers in the below ten range) all year long. Number two is that unlike in colder climates, mosses, unhelpful fungus, and weeds, and even some bugs like ants and scale will continue to be a problem on a regular basis. Spray a fifty-fifty white vinegar and water solution on mosses and bark fungus during a dry day or two and it will all turn brown and much drier so that it can all be gently brushed away without rubbing so hard that the bark is damaged on trunks, exposed roots, and branches and crotches. Don't miss the end of December and end of January dormant spraying, especially if you missed the end of November one. Horticultural oils of various types are industry standards in agriculture and they work great. Read the labels and measure exactly. The mixture is lighter by half for the trees like junipers and others that are still green and growing. This should kill scale and other overwintering critters so that you don't have to fight bigger and more damaging groups of them later. Do a very thorough job and cover the soil with newspaper when spraying so the oils don't enter the soil. Repeat the whole process if it rains within thirty six hours.

When it rains too frequently the pots should be propped up on one end to help them drain. When it rains too lightly, you have to go scratch at the soil with a chopstick to see if the water actually penetrated the soil, especially on evergreens and conifers. When it doesn't rain, scratch again to make sure that the tree is really dry enough to need the water you want to give it.

When frost comes, or freezing below thirty six degrees for too many hours, put the pots under the eaves of the house or under their benches and protect from wind. Tropicals and the smaller pots and tender plants need protection when the temperature goes below forty degrees. But some trees fruit better or flower better if they get a light frost now and then, so just keep a close eye on the actual weather, not just the weather report.

Wiring this time of year on deciduous trees is possible, and some people do it, but if you injure the tree this time of year it will be very slow to heal, sometimes with ugly or even deadly consequences. And it's easy to knock off buds and spurs that will be needed later. And there's very little woody growth to make the wiring really worthwhile by the end of Winter. And you really shouldn't bend big branches or make radical bends now. You may decide it's best to just wait for the Spring push for deciduous wiring. Maybe stick to conifers and evergreens for Winter wiring.

Take some pictures of your trees against a North wall or in neutral light because the camera will make you see things that your eye misses. Prop them up on some bean bags to find a new angle or even a new design for the future and pull out that picture to use as a guide when you finally get to repot. Use the Winter to try to see future possibilities for your garden, for your trees, for your own life. The possibilities are endless, and none of it happens unless you take the time to think it through.

The Taskmaster

Upcoming Northern California Bonsai Events

December 6, 2014 Fresno, California
Fresno Bonsai Society: Seventh Annual
Bonsai Yard Sale at 736 West Browning. Set
up begins at 8 AM. Everyone is welcome to buy,
sell or trade. Sales include pre-bonsai, finished
trees, pots, supplies, stands, books, suiseki and
accent plants. Lunch will be available. Great
bargains and great fun! If you need a table or
more information, contact Ralph Schroeder
at ralSch@sbcglobal.net or Peter Schaffert
at peteschaffert@gmail.com.

January 14, 2015 Oakland, California at
Lakeside Garden Center, 666 Bellevue
Ave, Oakland, CA. East Bay Bonsai Society
would like to invite your bonsai club members to
"BREAK IN THE NEW YEAR WITH KATHY
SHANER!" on Wednesday, January
14th at 7:30pm in Oakland, CA. Kathy will be
working on a Korean Hornbeam and after the
tree will be raffled, along with other items.

Kathy, given the title of "Bonsai Master" by the
Nippon Bonsai Association in Japan and also the
curator of GSBF Bonsai Gardens at Lake Merritt,
will demonstrate the nuances of bringing out
the essence of a multi-trunk Korean Hornbeam.
The demo tree along with other items will be
raffled following the demo. Don't miss this
chance to see Kathy in action!
Michael Hylton, Vice President, East Bay Bonsai
Society. www.eastbaybonsai.org

January 24-25 Oakland, California
Bay Island Bonsai Annual Bonsai Exhibit at
the Lakeside Garden Center, 666 Bellevue Ave.
Hours: 10AM-4PM, Saturday and Sunday. Auc-
tion on Saturday, preview at noon and auction
at 1pm. Bonsai demonstration by Boon Mana-
kitivipart on Sunday at 1 PM. Guided tours of
the exhibit both Saturday and

Sunday. Vendor sales, Club sales, Educational
bonsai material for sale, A special pots sales this
year. Entry to Exhibit is free, donations accept-
ed. For more information (510) 919-5042 or go
to [http://bayislandbonsai.com/bib-annual-
exhibit/](http://bayislandbonsai.com/bib-annual-exhibit/)

February 21 – 22, 2015 Oakland, CA
GSBF Bonsai Garden at Lake Merritt: The
annual Mammoth Fund Raiser will be held at
666 Bellevue Ave. (Garden Center Building). Sat-
urday: Auction preview at noon with Auction
starting at 1 PM. Sunday: Vendor Sales start at 9
AM, Plant Sales start at 10 AM, and Demonstra-
tions at 1 PM. Also on Sunday help us celebrate
our 15th Anniversary! The Bonsai Garden at Lake
Merritt will celebrate the many bonsai clubs who
have created and supported the Garden by invit-
ing Bonsai Clubs from all over Northern California
to showcase their best trees. Bonsai Garden will
be open 10 AM to 4 PM on Saturday and Noon to
4 PM on Sunday. For more information or to sell
trees, email bonsailakemerritt@gmail.com and
visit www.gsbf-lakemerritt.org.

Bonsai Wire Newsletter Submissions:

The deadline for the Bonsai Wire
Newsletter is the Saturday following the
Club's Monthly General Meeting.

Please email any news, articles, event
info, Haiku, photos etc. to:
mbcnews@marinbonsai.org

Marin Bonsai Club Events

December 7, 2014: Annual Holiday Party.

January 6, 2015: Monthly Meeting,
Marin Society of Artists Building, 7:30 PM.
Demo, possibly repotting. More details in
January Newsletter.

January 20, 2015: Monthly Workshop,
Marin Society of Artists Building, 7 PM.
Free for members. \$10 for non-members.



2014 Marin Bonsai Club Officers:

President	Tim Burke	415-259-7372
VP Programs	David Eichhorn	415-888-3756
VP Shows	Jay McDonald	415-847-8909
Secretary	Candace Key	415-491-1989
	Daniel Keller	415-453-7265
Treasurer	Art Wasserman	415-454-3077
Historian	Carolyn Robbins	415-460-0339
Librarian	Roger Lion	415-924-5134
Webmaster	Sharon Bone	415-898-9618
Newsletter	Scott Piatanesi	415-456-6848
Hospitality	Marlene Philley	415-924-5134
Docent Coord	Vacant	

Marin Bonsai Club
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