

Bonsai Wire

Marin Bonsai Club



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

August 2015

From the VP of Programs...

This past July was an especially fun month to be a member of the Marin Bonsai Club. First the Marin County Fair Show went smoothly and entertained volunteers and visitors alike. Jay McDonald's minions made him proud, everybody had fun among the trees, and once again countless members of the public encountered bonsai for the first time. The lasting benefit: there were nearly 40 people who signed up as potential participants in the Beginners' Workshop, so hopefully that August class will fill up quickly and some new enthusiasts will be born.

Next came Peter Tea with his fourth and final lecture in what is being called our trial year with Peter. The time sure did fly! With the three previous theory-driven lectures as foundation, Peter was able to give us more directed tree-development details this time around. He also brought one of his trees that is in development to help illustrate points he made during the lecture, and he used it to demonstrate some pad-development trimming at the end of the lecture. 12 people stayed 15 minutes late to see some of Peter's trimming demo, with eight of those hanging out a full half hour past the end of the lecture. Even when I couldn't see exactly what Peter was doing, I was enchanted by the sinuous curves and twisted deadwood all over his tree.

Talking mostly about junipers, Peter discussed various tree-development techniques organized

under the overall topics of pruning, bending, and grafting. One valuable technique he showed us for trimming juniper branches involves boldly cutting vigorous branches back to two side branches, rather than trying to keep the juvenile-looking branches that originally grew out, all together. Left to its own devices, a healthy juniper will tend to put out pairs of shoots on either side of a main branch, creating a fishbone-like structure. Peter acknowledged that it is tempting to try to keep all of those branches and trim all their tips for ramification and pad development. That may seem like the fastest way to pad and branch development, but not only does it preserve an undesirable juvenile look, but trimming all those branches will more often than not result in all the tree's energy being diverted to the main branch's growth tip, not back-budding or ramification.

When you cut the main branch back to just two side branches, then make one the new main branch and the other a side branch, then repeat again and again, you begin down a more productive road of naturalistic, old-looking, and interesting branch structure development. In the short term, you may frown at the "plucked chicken" look of your tree, but the long term results will more than make up for it. And because a healthy juniper will grow relatively quickly, "long term" doesn't have to be more than a few years.

VP Programs Continued...

Another good tip Peter gave us, under the topic of deadwood and other methods of making a juniper look older, was to fatten lifelines growing alongside deadwood. Deadwood is well-known for creating an old, weathered look, but Peter showed us that lifelines contribute to an aged look also when they are fatter than the neighboring deadwood. The effect emphasizes the look of a tree that survived some calamity and then grew around and beyond the resulting damage. To fatten a lifeline, let the branches it feeds grow without trimming, the same way you would to fatten a trunk or branch. In addition, to accentuate and facilitate the fattening process, trim the lifeline's edges where it borders on the deadwood. This allows you to more sharply define your desired lines and encourages thicker bark growth where you've trimmed.

This month we will be having our usual workshop on August 4th in the MAGC Multipurpose Room. This would be a good time to get squared away with anything you might want to sell in, or donate to, our next big annual event, the Marin Bonsai Auction. That will be happening August 18th in the Marin Society of Artists building at the south end of the MAGC grounds, starting at 7:00 PM. Look to Candace's write-up in this issue for more details about that.

Rumor has it that Peter Tea will be back in September, but the details have not been worked out just yet. The board will decide and announce the official September program just before the August workshop. Looking further ahead, we definitely have Bob Shimon lined up to talk to us about redwoods in October.

Looking forward to the fun and excitement of the Auction!

David Eichhorn

IMPORTANT NOTICE: CHANGE IN CLUB POLICY

As you all know, it is both a privilege and a responsibility of membership in the Marin Bonsai Club to provide docents to the Bonsai Gardens at Lake Merritt on the 4th Saturday of each month from 10 AM to 1 PM. This is just 3 short hours out of your year, yet we are still not getting the energetic response from members we had hoped. This has led the Board to institute new Club rules. Going forward members will not be allowed to exhibit trees at our shows unless they have volunteered at the Gardens. Obviously members were not notified of this policy before this past show at the Marin County Fair, but we hope those who did show and have not volunteered so far this year will step up and do the right thing.

Furthermore, beginning in January members who have not volunteered at the Gardens during 2015 will be charged \$20 for the very popular repotting workshops as incentive to take on their docent responsibilities. We hope you will take these new rules in the spirit in which they are intended; to involve members in the larger bonsai community, take advantage of the education working at the Gardens provides, and contribute to an amazing bonsai resource we are very fortunate to have in our midst. So step up please. Contact Roger Lion at the phone number on the last page and sign up for your shift. You'll love it and be eager to go back. We promise!

The Marin Bonsai Board

It is Auction Time Again

The annual club auction is upon us! Tuesday August 18 we will be wheeling and dealing and hopefully making lots of money for the club. It is rumored that there will be some fine bonsai being auctioned as well as promising pre- bonsai material, stands and pots. This is one event you don't want to miss even if you aren't in a buying mood. It is just plain fun.

We will host the auction in the Marin Society of Artists building at the Marin Art and Garden Center again this year. It is a little cozy, but it worked out well last year. For those of you haven't attended workshops in this building, it is on the right as you drive in the main gate and there is a parking area adjacent. Preview begins at 7:00 with the auction starting at 7:30, right after a brief club meeting.

Many of you will be there early because you have generously offered to help with the auction, or have been mercilessly drafted. In either case, thank you so much for your assistance. If you haven't volunteered or been drafted yet and can help, please let Candace know.

Publicity is always our biggest challenge. We will have notices on the Golden Statements website, in the local papers and local bonsai clubs will make announcements in their newsletters, but please talk the event up with friends and colleagues who you think might be interested. It would be great if we could get a volunteer to post something on Craigslist. Hint, hint.

Auction Particulars:

- Preview starts at 7:00. We are asking members to be there early to answer questions and advise on auction material. Please wear your hapi coats if you have them so visitors can identify club members.

- Refreshments will be served
- Cash and checks only

The MSA building will be open at 5:00 for tree delivery and we need all items to be set up by 6:45. Inventory forms need to be filled out for all trees be they consignment or donations so we can keep track of the sales, and identification tags are required on all donation AND consignment trees.

Please consider if you will require a minimum bid on either a donation or consignment item. We will clearly mark the tags with this information, but it helps to have numbers firmly in mind before you get to MAGC on Auction night. We will have forms and tags available at the August 4 workshop. If you can't pick them up then please come early on auction night so you aren't doing paperwork at the last minute.

We are always very grateful for donations to the club and encourage members to donate items outright when they can. However, if you need/want to make money off the sale yourself then there are 2 options; splitting the proceeds 50/50 with the club or an 80/20 split with the member taking 80%. The club will cap their share of the proceeds from sales of more expensive trees at \$100. This is to encourage members to bring their better trees and know they will get the maximum for their investment in the tree when selling it at the auction.

Here are some tips and ground rules for this year's auction:

- Bonsai pots are welcome, but they need to be clean and in good condition. No cracked or chipped pots can be accepted. Please consider grouping pots together to make the \$20 auction minimum as sadly most pots do not go for higher prices.

Auction Continued...

Special pots certainly can stand on their own in the auction or on the sales table.

- Trees that are well groomed, clear of weeds and moss and nicely potted in a bonsai pot will bring the highest prices.
- No sick trees please!

Sales Table:

- All decent trees and pots are welcome for auction, but we have seen in the past that the auction can get bogged down on small ticket items when we would really like to spend our time (and make more money) on the more expensive trees and pots. We will not be auctioning any item we don't think will command at least \$20. However, the SALES TABLE has been a successful addition to the event, so we will have an area where members can put a price on the item and anyone who wants to buy it outright can. There is no upper or lower limit price on sale trees.
- The same consignment splits mentioned above apply for sales trees. All unsold items need to go home with you or they will go in the trash.
- Please invite anyone you can think of who has an interest in bonsai! There will be items of all prices and quality, certainly something for everyone.
- Come early with your items for auction, bid often and high, stay late and pick up those end-of-the-auction bargains to help us make this our best auction ever!

- Call Candace with questions, and please let her know if you can work as a runner or numbers keeper on Auction night.

Thank you!

Candace Key

Beginners' Workshops in August

As most of you know we hold a 2 part series of Beginners' Workshops at the end of August. Many people who attend the Fair in July have signed up, but the course is open to Marin Bonsai Club members as well. If you have never taken a beginning bonsai course or want a refresher these classes are a great opportunity to sharpen your skills. Taught by Chris Ross and John Doig you will learn everything you need to know to get started; how to select trees for bonsai, how they are grown and how to keep them healthy, how to style different species, what growing medium is best, which pots to use, all that good stuff. If you do the 2 session course, in which you will style and wire 2 trees, the cost is \$70. Dates are Thursdays August 20 and 27. Please sign up with David Eichhorn if you, a family member or friend would like to attend.

Candace Key

The Taskmaster, August 2015

August in the Northern Bay Area microclimates is a time of wondering what next. When the temperatures go above eighty five degrees or so, the trees shut down transpiration to conserve water, and even though the surface of the soil can seem dry the rootball may stay quite moist because the tree has stopped drinking much. Wind can further dry the foliage, and there's your burnt leaf edges and seared tips, right there. Scratch the soil with a chopstick to see how deep the dryness goes to find out how much water to add and when. If you repeatedly add of water and the tree keeps slowing down and never drying out, the constant moisture and heat will grow fungus, mildew, and rot. You have to figure out a way to consistently let the soil get nearly dry and then add moisture, not an indiscriminate flood. And constantly wet soil with fertilizer in it is even worse.

When the days get too hot, remember that afternoon sun, even fairly late sun, is hotter and drier than any other time. Move tender trees and small pots to the East or even the North side of a house, fence, shrub, hedge, or tree for the hottest days. Some growers submerge the smaller pots in a cheap plastic colander or basket full of pumice or lava for the hottest months to keep the roots cooler and to slow their drying out. To reduce the effects of wind and leaf burn, you can mist if you have shade cloth or other bright shade, but it's not a good idea in bright sun. One solution is to spray with Cloud Cover or other protective sprays. Eleanor's VF-11 is a good leaf spray product for all plants that can be used in full sun, and is a very good means of foliar feeding, too.

Pots that are especially slow to dry may be getting rootbound. The roots grow at least as fast, if not faster than the tops of plants, and by August the poorly-draining pots are beginning to become noticeable. Get a Phillips screwdriver (good grip, slender shaft, pointed

tip and smooth surface mean fewer roots damaged) and poke it down through the soil to the bottom of the pot in lots of places to conduct air into the roots and promote better drainage. Mark these pots for earliest repotting when it's safe, usually January or February

All the sun and heat means now is a good time to work on jin and shari. Dead wood needs to be protected and hardened Lime sulfur solution is the best for the job, and the sun will bake it in and bleach and sterilize the wood. Apply it with a brush or Q-tip for small areas, a bigger brush or corner of a sponge for larger areas, and keep it off the bark, leaves and soil. If it seems too white and bleachy for your taste, add a few drops of India ink to a quarter cup and reapply.

Bugs are in full glory right now, so use the "fan" setting on a hose-end garden nozzle to spray over and under all foliage and bark now and then for mites and aphids. Bait for ants even if you only see a few. Spray Ortho Max and Malathion and other sprays now and then if and when it seems necessary, but switch around because lots of bugs can become immune to products used too consistently. Best time to spray is evenings and very early mornings so sun and heat won't cause chemical burns on the leaves. Always protect the soil and shake off excess from the leaves.

Any earlier wiring done earlier is likely to be cutting in by now, and earlier growth may be hardening off, so this is a good time to remove tight wires and to wire or rewire new growth. And here's the kicker: This is the only chance you get at it, so you have to go do it now. If the new growth gets just a little too thick while the Summer slips by, especially on deciduous trees and broadleaf evergreens, then it won't be flexible enough to wire it properly and you'll have to cut it off, grow some newer new growth, and try to be on

Taskmaster Continued...

time to wire that instead. See how you can lose a whole year's development while you think you're just growing a healthier tree? And the wires that cut in can create bark and branch damage that may have to be cut off, too. So go get that wire and get busy, tiger.

Turn your pots every week. Garage sales frequently have cheap lazy susans to make this easy. Check your trees at night sometimes, when things look all different by flashlight and you may find night pests like earwigs and slugs that you didn't know you needed to deal with. Sears sells a Craftman lighted hat to make this easier. Put sphagnum moss on the tops of pots out in full sun to keep surface roots alive and healthy. New Zealand sphagnum is thought to be the cleanest and best, with nice long fibers. Some garden centers like the one behind the United Market on East Second Street carry this in bricks of different sizes, which will make this easier, and there's a friendly, knowledgeable woman who works there who is very helpful. Some low-nitrogen fertilizer at the beginning of September can be a great thing for a tree that lacks vigor, needs to just get bigger quicker, or will be trying to set next year's fruit and flower buds this Fall. Ewing's, on Irwin Street, San Rafael sells big old bags of Grow Power 5-3-1 and some organics that can make this easier. You can get disposable woven paper tea bags at most Asian markets which will hold three tablespoons of fertilizer. Placed around a tree on the soil and watered, they will leach a small amount of fertilizer into the soil daily, and that will make this job easier.

Make sure there's peace in the garden and peace in your life as often as possible. A lawn chair, a cool drink and some silent reflection can make this easier. Try to locate love and joy in your heart as often as possible. They seem to reside in close proximity to one another. A joyous love relationship with another human being can awaken your heart and help to make this easier. Extend this joy to your friends, your dog, your garden, maybe even the cat,

and your life will begin to mean more. To feel joy is to become stronger and more youthful and more open to whatever's next.

The Taskmaster

Haiku for an august night

I sleep through the night
August breathes through the window
Summer is my dream

Oh no! Don't go!

We are sad to announce that our wonderful Bonsai Wire newsletter editor Scott Piatanesi will be retiring at the end of the year. Scott has done a heroic job for the past 4 years and we will miss his steady hand tremendously. However, the show and the newsletter must go on! We need to quickly get a new newsletter editor in place so the hand-off from Scott can be a smooth transition for all. Here is a brief description of the job requirements:

- can fog a mirror (just kidding)
- some ability to work on the computer or a willingness to learn (any number of software applications could be used - there is no need to use the same one Scott has worked with and we are happy to assist in getting you set up)
- organizational ability - both for the material that goes into the newsletter and wrangling the contributors
- a sense of humor

This is an absolutely vital function to the survival of the Marin Bonsai Club so finding Scott's successor quickly is critical. Please contact any board member right away if you would like the honor of being our next heroic newsletter editor.

Candace Key

Upcoming Northern California Bonsai Events

August 1 – 2, 2015 San Francisco, California San Francisco Suiseki Kai: 4th Annual Suiseki Exhibit at the Union Bank Community Room, Japan Center, 1675 Post Street. Hours are 10 AM – 5 PM both days . Show coincides with the 42nd annual Nihonmachi Street Fair, so come early and enjoy your day in San Francisco's historic Japan Town! Suiseki and stone sales. For more information about our club, contact sfsuisekikai@gmail.com or visit <http://sfsuisekikai.wordpress.com>.

August 22 – 23, 2015 **Santa Rosa, California** Redwood Empire Bonsai Society (REBS): 32th Annual show at the Santa Rosa Veterans building, 1351 Maple Ave. 10 AM – 5 PM Saturday and 10 AM – 4 PM Sunday with demonstrations both days at 1 PM by club sensei Kathy Shaner. Large exhibit of members' trees, vendors' sales room, members' sales room, raffle and silent auction. Free admission, parking and treats. Contact Bob Shimon @ 707-884-4126 or shimon@mcn.org

September 26 – 27, 2015 Penryn, California Sierra Bonsai Club: Club show in conjunction with Placer Buddhist Church's Annual Fall Food Festival. Hours are 11 AM – 4 PM Saturday and 11 AM to 4 PM Sunday. Bonsai demonstration by Scott Chadd in the afternoon, both days. For more information contact Robin Knittle at robin_knittle@yahoo.com or Gary Judd at juddbonsai@att.net or 916-622-8048.

October 17 – 18, 2015 Union City, California. Yamato Bonsai Kai: 44th Annual Bonsai Exhibition at the Southern Alameda County Buddhist Church, 32975 Alvarado-Niles Rd. Hours are Saturday Noon to 6 PM and Sunday 10 AM to 5 PM. Demonstrations each day at 2 PM by Johnny Uchida, with Mike Baker and Tony Hayworth. Benefit raffle each day after the demo. Raffle includes the demo tree. Large Vendor and Plant Sales area. Free Admission &

Parking. For additional information, call Tony Hayworth at 510-289-5731 or visit our web site at www.yamatobonsai.org.

October 24 – 25, 2015 Sacramento, California Capital City Bonsai Association: 15th Annual Show supporting GSBF Bonsai Garden at Lake Merritt and Sacramento bonsai clubs. Shepard Garden Center in McKinley Park, 3330 McKinley Blvd. Hours are 10 AM – 5 PM Saturday and 10 AM – 4 PM Sunday, with demonstration both days at 1:30 PM by sponsor clubs with bonsai benefit drawings to follow. Vendor and club sales throughout the show. For more information contact Gary Judd at 916-622-8048 or juddbonsai@att.net .

Artisans Cup

September 25 – 27, 2015 Portland, Oregon. The Artisans Cup is being held at The Portland Art Museum. The Artisans Cup is the premier exhibition of American Bonsai. The event will also feature select artisans who are creating distinctive supporting elements such as ceramics, woodwork, tools, and more. For further information, visit our website at <http://www.theartisancup.com/>.

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

August 4, 2015: Workshop,
Multi-Purpose Room, 7 PM. Free for members. \$10 for non-members.

August 18, 2015: Monthly Meeting, Annual
Auction, Marin Society of Artists Building,
7 PM.

September 1, 2015: Workshop,
Marin Society of Artists Building, 7 PM.
Free for members. \$10 for non-members.

September 15, 2015: Monthly Meeting,
Activity TBA, Multi-Purpose Room, 7:30
PM.



2015 Marin Bonsai Club Officers:

President	Vacant	
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
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