



Bonsai Wire Marin Bonsai Club

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

May 2015

From the VP of Programs...

We had another great Peter Tea presentation in April, which drew such a crowd it was standing room only. This time around, Peter began to build on some of the knowledge base he developed in the previous two lectures. A thematic thread throughout his talk was the idea that once you have the knowledge base you need to practice bonsai, getting better becomes a matter of practice and consistency.

Before talking about specific bonsai techniques like cutting and wiring, and a few more advanced ones like air layering and grafting, Peter spent the first part of his talk focusing on the four other things we must first learn about caring for our bonsai: providing proper sunlight, watering, soil preparation, and fertilizing. He has gone into some specifics on these topics before, and covered some more this time around. More generally, he was building to his thematic point that we cannot properly learn to work on our trees with styling techniques until we know that changes we see in the trees are not due to those other four factors. Once we have learned to manage the horticultural needs of the trees, we can eliminate them as variables if we have problems with the trees or if our attempts to style them fail.

Peter strongly encourages experimentation with bonsai, whichever variables you're trying to master. Maybe not with an \$800 tree during your first three years of learning, but whenever

possible, and to a degree reasonable for the type, phase of development, and most important, the health of the tree, you should not be afraid to try out new techniques, fertilizers, yard locations, etc. with your trees. But always pin down the easiest to control factors before you start experimenting with the riskier ones.

Peter finished up with more discussion of trimming and how energy distribution issues tie into it. Then he kindly and enthusiastically turned to our Bonsai Boot Camp trees and spent at least 15 minutes talking about them. He was eager to see what techniques were being applied to the trees and tied them into his talk by pointing out that he could tell where the designers were taking the trees based on what they had done to the trees so far. That, he said, is one of the ways in which the common knowledge of basic techniques and consistency in their application pay off.

This month, after a regular workshop on the 5th in the Marin Society of Artists building at 7:00p.m., we have more expertise at our disposal as Jonas Dupich joins us for "Ask Bonsai Tonight," the 100% question and answer evening, Tuesday, May 19th, in the Multipurpose Room, beginning at 7:30p.m. Bring your trees and your questions!

VP Programs Continued...


And expect something along the lines of show prep at the June meeting. The Marin County Fair will be here before you know it!

Trimming our trees—it's never-ending but never dull.

Notice

Did you leave your notes from the Peter Tea meeting behind? If so you are sure to want them back. They will be at the May workshop for you to claim.


David Eichhorn



Bay Area Satsuki Aikokai

Annual Satsuki Azalea Bonsai Exhibition
May 16 and 17, 2015
Saturday and Sunday, 10 AM to 4 PM both Days

Colorful azaleas in full bloom, many imported from Japan
Demonstration on Saturday at 1:00 PM by bonsai artist and teacher Johnny Uchida
Demonstration tree to be raffled
Educational forums throughout the day Sunday
Experts on hand to talk about the trees and answer questions
Plant sales
Free admission, public invited. Parking available



Lakeside Park Garden Center, located at 666 Bellevue Ave., Lake Merritt, Oakland, California
For more information, contact George Haas at gwhaas@comcast.net

Some of the beautiful trees and enthralled guests at the
2015 Cherry Blossom Festival in Japantown.

Photos by Chris Ross



Cherry Photos Continued...



The Taskmaster, May 2015

May in the Bonsai world is a busy time. And it has such a positive feel just to say it, doesn't it? As in things May be better this year; or, this little beauty May make it to the show this year; or, May is the ideal time to...

It's the ideal time to finish repotting the evergreens that didn't get done yet. First the broadleaf evergreens, then the junipers and conifers. Put them in bright shade only, constantly damp but never soaking and no food for three weeks or so.

It's the ideal time late in the month to feed 70/30% cottonseed/bone meal, a tablespoon or two sprinkled around the outside one third edge of the pot and scratched in with a chopstick on all pots. That's the traditional and original organics approach. There are other organic mixes that yield nitrogen faster, water soluble pellets and granulars with varied NPK numbers to suit your preference. Some growers put it in tea bags, available at most Asian markets in two or three sizes and in packs of ten to fifty, because they don't want anything in the pot that might possibly clog the drainage capability of the soil. Then they are careful to water through the tea bags every time so the contents of the tea bags is certain to be carried into the soil. At a guess, the tea bags must be replaced every four to six weeks.

This is the ideal time to pinch back everything to create branch ramification and budding back. On deciduous trees, find where you want the side branching to occur and cut off everything beyond that point, leaving a stem for dieback, to be removed later (unless you want the branch to be thicker-just let it grow long for now). On evergreens pinch off just the bright green tips, to remove a hormone that they produce which prevents backbudding. Junipers are currently thought to grow better if left alone to grow strongly until cutting back becomes possible.

This is the ideal time to deal with various pests that are in their prime and proliferating right now. Paint Neem oil or Volck oil onto scale bugs with a large watercolor brush like the ones you get with a paint-by-numbers kit or a fat soft Q-tip. Picking them off may damage the bark that the tree must repair and leave eggs and larvae behind for another damaging round. Horticultural oils smother all. Spray Malathion or Sevin or Ortho Max in the evening or very early morning every two or three weeks on non-flowering plants for aphids, ants, inchworms, stickworms and leafrollers. Try to use non-chemical solutions on all your trees before resorting to the hard stuff, and especially on the flowering and fruiting trees where pollinating insects tend to hang out.

It's the ideal time at month's middle or end to defoliate healthy, vigorous deciduous trees partially or fully to create smaller leaves and more intense Fall color. But not beech trees, they won't push out any new growth. This defoliation is usually only done on trees that are far enough along in the shaping and styling of bonsai cultivation to be trees that can be shown. If they need to grow some more or be styled, this can only weaken the tree a bit and slow it down temporarily.

The ideal time to lightly prune back flowering trees that have finished blooming. Next year's blooms will be on this Spring's new growth, so prune to preserve and protect only the new growth that is in the right places. The old blooming sections can be removed or shortened, and the upgrowing suckers can be removed (or pruned back hard; but leave a bit and don't cut back quite so far if a spot of green or some growth is needed in that location, for now, to balance the look of the tree).

The Taskmaster Continued...

Hard pruning with larger cutting back to shorten and control size of tree and length of branch should be done only every three years or so on flowering trees, and usually at repotting, because both of those operations are likely to reduce or prevent most of the next cycle of flowering. Note that on fruiting trees, these operations should be done late in the year when the fruit fades or drops (but well before cold sets in) unless the new Spring fruit is unimportant for the current cycle, in which case it's just another flowering tree.

Late May and into June is the ideal time to decandle black pines. Lots of variations here, but the first issue is whether the branchlet each candle is on needs to be longer. If so, a longer candle stump must remain on the tree at the end of the pinching process, which takes three weeks or so. The next issue is to begin each phase of decandling with the strongest zones, the most vigorous areas or branches, to give the weaker areas and the intermediate areas more time to get stronger. The next issue is to begin each phase with the strongest candles in each zone. All this may not be strictly necessary, but it is a way to be more precise, so that you can see the results of what you do clearly, and can learn from that what your tree and soil and microclimate require from you in order to reliably produce the optimal results of even, slow growth in every zone of the tree.

Phase one: strongest candles, strongest areas
wait 7-10 days

Phase two: medium candles, strong
areas; and strongest candles in inter-
mediate areas wait 7-10 days

Phase three: weak candles in strong areas;
medium candles in intermediate areas;
and strongest candles in weakest areas
wait 7-10 days

Phase four: weak candles in intermediate areas; medium candles in weakest areas. All this should be done with the thumb and forefinger in a pinch-and-break motion to protect the immature needles left on the candle stump. Some growers use sharp shears to make a very flat cut at ninety degrees to the growth of each candle. In general, an eighth to a quarter of an inch or so will be left on the tree, which will be the approximate width of the candle in each case.

There are other things, no doubt, that need doing, but that's always the way it goes, isn't it? And so it goes in life as well. There are friendships that need tending (and they occasionally need pruning, I guess). There are loves to be expressed and enjoyed and quiet satisfactions to be sought out, and the poetry of your heart to be listened to. You've got to make time for all of it, you know you do, or life just gets away from you.

Haiku for May

Sometimes in mid May
Love catches me by the heart
Springtime blooms at last

The Taskmaster

Upcoming Northern California Bonsai Events

May 2 – 3, 2015 Palo Alto, California
Kusamura Bonsai Club: 55th Annual Show at the Lucie Stern Community Center, 1305 Middlefield Road. Show hours are Noon – 5 PM on Saturday and 11 AM – 5 PM on Sunday with a demonstration at 1 PM each day; special guest demonstrator Saturday. Club member sales available. For more information contact Mark O'Brien at (650) 327-0450 or mobrien-trees@hotmail.com. The club's website: www.kusamurabonsai.org also has more details.

May 2 – 3, 2015 Sacramento, California
Sacramento Bonsai Club: 69th Annual Bonsai & Suiseki Show at Buddhist Church of Sacramento, 2401 Riverside Blvd. Hours are Noon – 5 PM Saturday and 10 AM – 4 PM Sunday with demonstrations on both days at 2 PM by Sam Adina. Benefit drawings, plant and tree sales. For more information visit www.sacramentobonsaiclub.com or contact Gary Judd at ajuddbonsai@att.net or 916-622-8048.

May 3, 2015 Watsonville, California
Watsonville Bonsai Club: 42nd Annual Bonsai Exhibit held at the Watsonville Buddhist Temple, 423 Bridge St. Over 50 outstanding bonsai, large and small, young and old, will be on display from 10 AM – 4 PM, with a demonstration by award winning Bonsai Master Katsumi Kinoshita at 1:30 PM. A raffle of bonsai items, plants and the demo tree will follow. Tea & cookies will be served. Plenty of parking for vehicles of all sizes; even for group outings. A vendor will be available to satiate your plant appetite for bonsai or otherwise. For more information contact Don White at (831) 724-9283 or whiteslib@aol.com.

May 16 – 17, 2015, Sacramento, California
Satsuki Aikokai of Sacramento: Annual Bonsai Show will be held at the Shepard Garden Center, 3330 McKinley Blvd. Hours are Saturday 10 AM – 5PM, and 10 AM – 4PM, with demonstrations at 1 PM on both days by Yuzo Maruyama. Satsuki information booth, vendors, raffles, etc. For more information contact satsukiaikokaisac@sbcglobal.net or Ronn Pigram (916) 428-8505.

May 16 – 17, 2015, Oakland, California
Bay Area Satsuki Aikokai: 20th Annual Satsuki Bonsai Exhibition at the Lakeside Park Garden Center, 666 Bellevue Ave. Hours 10 AM to 4 PM, both days: demonstration on Saturday at 1 PM by bonsai artist and teacher Johnny Uchida with demo tree to be raffled. Educational forums throughout the day Sunday. Colorful azaleas in full bloom, many imported from Japan. Experts on hand to talk about the trees and answer questions. Plant sales. Free admission, public invited, parking available. For further information, contact George Haas at gwhaas@comcast.net.

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

May 5, 2015: Workshop,
Marin Society of Artists Building, 7 PM.
Free for members. \$10 for non-members.

May 19, 2015: Monthly Meeting, Ask Bon-
sai Tonight, Multi-Purpose Room, 7:30 PM.

June 2, 2015: Workshop,
Marin Society of Artists Building, 7 PM.
Free for members. \$10 for non-members.

June 16, 2015: Show Preparation,
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
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