

Bonsai Wire

Marin Bonsai Club



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

November 2015

From the VP of Programs

Here we are at Autumn again. Such a fun time to have trees with fall colors. We are all a little sad, of course, because once again we will not be having a Fall Show this year. But enough of us want it badly enough that there is hope we will figure it out for 2016. Meanwhile, look for Candaces announcement of a smaller scale get-together we are having that does not replace the Fall Show, but will somewhat soothe the part of our collective heart that longs for that event. All while we honor a cherished long-standing member of the club.

There is so much to report from the last two months, let us start with what is coming up instead.

There are just two more workshops left for the year, November 3rd and December 1st, and no more meetings, due to the Holidays. We will be holding elections during the November workshop, so do not miss it. Also keep an eye out for the Holiday Party announcement. Last I heard, the party was being planned for the first weekend in December, but look to the announcement for the final details. Meanwhile, plans are beginning to take shape for our repotting season events. Stay tuned for details.

Our Bonsai Boot Camp program continues with the three remaining trees and the recruits training them under the supervision of their mentors. Originally, this was presented as an eight-month competition that would culminate in an auction, which I had proposed for this month. However, based on the feedback from recruits, mentors, and spectators alike, it has been decided that the Boot Camp should be a year longer. Not only does that allow the recruits to work with the trees throughout all the seasons,

but it also gives them more time to see the effects of their hard work, and supports the spirit of the event, which is to move away from destructive quick-chop styling competitions and toward long-term education. Since we most likely will kick off another set of recruits in the spring, that means we will have two overlapping sets of recruits until the first batch completes their program in the fall of 2016. If we keep it up, this will be the last year that we do not have a graduating set of recruits in every fall.

Looking back, the club enjoyed a couple more months of sound education, first in September with Peter Teas fifth installment, featuring illustrative trees, and then with Bob Shimons Redwood lecture and demonstration in October, where more was trained than just the demo tree.



Peter Tea discusses a Trident Maple as TJ Williams as and Adam Petra's look on.

Photo & caption courtesy Candace Key.

VP Programs Continued...

Attendees arriving to Peter Teas lecture in September were immediately greeted with Peters unique approach to the evening. He brought four trees and had them on four tables, which he moved among and incorporated into his discussion. His focus: what can be done now to junipers and deciduous trees, with two types of junipers, a Seiju Elm, and a Trident Maple as his subjects. He covered both the removal and cutting back of branches, and signs to look for to make sure a tree is ready for those procedures, like runners (or tip extensions on junipers) and the hardening off of the growth. Among the vast amounts of information Peter provided, some of the particularly critical tidbits were that Sierra Junipers do not like pinching (commit to cutting entire branch portions rather than growth tips) and that California, Sierra, and other native junipers cannot be cut back too hard. Even after you have successfully induced back budding on those, the runner growth needs to be cut back in stages to avoid weakening these trees. Wait for the desired back growth to get good and healthy before cutting the runner away entirely.



Morris Dailey puzzles over Peter's description of developing Sierra junipers.

Photo & caption courtesy Candace Key.

Bob Shimon brought a few spectacular display trees in addition to the tree that was extensively trimmed and wired for the demo he did for us at Octobers meeting. He also had time to discuss, and even lightly trim, trees brought in by Candace Key and Art Wasserman. Bob talked extensively about shaping Redwoods, their vigor, and collecting Redwoods and other trees. Apparently, Redwoods are so vigorous that when they are collected, all but a few feeder roots may be sacrificed, the foliage may be removed, and the trees survival chances will remain rather high. The best soil in which to place a newly collected Redwood is a sandy soil. Once the tree is ready to go into a regular bonsai pot, at least a year after collection, pure akadama soil works well. If you like using pumice and/or lava for increased drainage, one part of those elements may be added to two parts akadama.

When discussing the development of Redwoods, Bob pointed out that even his most ramified and bushy looking tree with him that night had relatively few branches. Redwoods do not need a lot of branches, just good movement and layers of growth achieved with a few. In addition, Redwoods do not do well in full sun, preferring at least midday, and even as much as all-day shade. Too much heat makes Redwoods go dormant. Lastly, Redwoods are virtually disease-free in nature, but subject to fungal infections when potted.



Photo courtesy Candace Key.

VP Programs Continued...

At the end of the night, Bobs demo tree was won by Michaele Jaffe. Congratulations, Michaele!

Enjoy those fall colors and I will see you at an event soon!

David Eichhorn



A Celebration of Bonsai

Long time Marin Bonsai Club member, past president, owner of Ambrosia restaurant, and supplier of many a fine pizza, lasagna and dinner enjoyed by club members over the years, has generously offered a room at Ambrosia for a mini-Fall Show. Since we will not be putting on our large show of Fall bonsai this year, Marks offer provides the opportunity to show, or just view trees from club members, in an elegant, relaxing venue. The event will be held on Saturday November 14, 2015 from 3:00-9:00 pm. This is an open house type affair, so come when you can, and stay for a while. The address is 850 College Ave. in Kentfield, CA.

Jay McDonald is heading up the effort. If you have trees you think will be in perfect form for this pop-up show please get in touch with Jay directly. There is not much space and we do not expect everyone to show a tree, but everyone is invited to participate and attend. Jay could use some help setting up too, so please contact him to volunteer. Club member presence is not required, but we hope you will take this opportunity to commune with fellow bonsai lovers, perhaps have a glass of wine at the no-host bar, and maybe say thank you to Mark for all he has contributed to Marin Bonsai over the decades. If you would like to extend your experience to dinner please call the restaurant soon for a reservation. 415.454.9292



Celebration Continued...

The Taskmaster, November 2015

Note: We will not be sending invitations to the show to the entire bonsai community this year, but you are welcome to invite anyone you think would enjoy the show. If you would like to download artwork for a postcard/mailler to print yourself please contact Candace and she will send a PDF file.

Candace Key

Pots, pots and more pots - Just in time for re-potting season

A very generous person has donated LOTS of bonsai pots to the club and we will be selling them at the November 3 meeting - just in time for repotting season. So think about your trees, take some measurements and photos, and come prepared to make some deals.

The November 3 workshop/meeting is our only meeting in November and the last one of the year, so come, get advice on repotting and other winter care tips from our club experts, or just hang out.

We are also having elections at the meeting and we would love to have lots of people there to vote, and celebrate the inauguration of a new club president.

Candace Key

Seems like every time you turn around, it's another set of jobs, another set of rules to follow, another set of conditions to be anticipated and prepared for. It's no illusion. That's the way it is out here in the bonsai world, the garden of earthly delights is only delightful if you learn the rules, plan well, anticipate the changes, and work at it some.

The changes is what we're up to now. Here in the San Francisco Bay Area microclimates, what passes for autumn is taking center stage. Planning well consists of finding out which trees can be worked on and to what extent. The rules this time of year are dictated by the change of season and the need to plan for what passes for Winter around here.

Usually what passes for Winter is a longish stretch of rainy days mixed with chilly mornings and mild cool afternoons, and a bunch of coldish nights with only an occasional brief frost or light freeze. Then a little stretch or two of fair, warm afternoons. Ha! Take THAT, all you Northern places. We got it good. But Winter still brings that hammer down, and it's no joke. Clean up on, around and under the benches and stands or bugs, moss, mold and mildew will thrive in the wet and cold. Get some wedges ready so you can prop up the pots, first one end and then, later, the other, if the rains are very heavy or last too long. Dormant spraying is done at the end of November, December, and January. You can use a dilution of lime sulfur if you can still find it, or the Winter-strength dilution of horticultural oil. Just be sure to get pure oil, 98 percent or higher, and be sure to do it. This step alone can save you a lot of work later and can save buds for flowers, fruits and leaves that might otherwise be lost to blight in Spring and Summer. Cover the soil before you spray, and do it in the evening or early morning so that the sun won't burn anything.

The leaves can be removed from deciduous trees whenever about half of them have fallen or have lost their green. Once the chlorophyll is gone, they don't feed the tree anymore anyway, and removing them lets you clearly see the form of the tree and its ramification. If wiring is to be done, now's the time to do it, because the trees will turn brittle within a week or two after the last of the leaves would have fallen. Just remember that everything

The Taskmaster Continued...

(probably even you) fattens up a bit over Winter, so use a soft, loose approach so that the wire can stay on until Spring growth begins without tightening up and damaging the bark. You can trim a bit for shape during this period, but don't cut any thick branches or create any sizable wounds because they probably won't heal fast enough, and they will become a portal for disease and persistent scarring. Please note that cutting on the trees after this period may cause them to bleed out a significant amount of the sap they've stored up for Spring. We have to let them sleep.

This is a good time to work on black pines. Take off older needles and maybe wire some things for shape, or even just to get them out of the way so sun and air can get to the interior of the tree. Bud selection needs to be done, and decisions made about how to treat the tree next Spring and Summer. Bring the pines to a November club meeting and get some advice. Order the book, Pines, from Stone lantern press, and read the archives of the Bonsai Tonight blog by Jonas Dupuich. But don't do nothing. Pines need to be tended a bit to prevent wasting time later on, and they grow fast and get out of hand before you know it.

When a really cold day or night or so of frost or some sneaky little freeze comes, the trees can be put under the eaves of the house or under their benches or even in the garage until the danger passes. It's never very long, or very bad. Then for the rest of the time they all like to stay out in the full sun most of the time. Usually that doesn't happen in November, but it couldn't hurt to keep up with the weather reports.

The evergreens and conifers and Junipers get slower, but they keep on growing right on through. You can wire them, and trim them some, and clean them and feed them as usual. While some growers opt for 0-10-10 fertilizers for Winter, others in our area just use low NPK numbers (below 10, like the GroPower 5-3-1 that I've seen used) all year long on all the trees with good results. Just be consistent.

Winter is a good time to take pictures of some of your trees and try to imagine a new angle, a new pot, a new style or shape. Now, in November, before everything changes, take some photos and then take the same ones after Christmas or New Year's for a revealing comparison. You'll enjoy this.

Move all the trees out into full sun. Get everything ready for cold, for rain, for wind, for sleep. Pull your friends in close, find some love wherever you can, watch the stars and the phases of the moon as they track across the Autumn sky. You never know just how much you may need the gold and red and warmth and love of Autumn in your heart as Winter drags into town for an extended visit like an unwelcome relative that you can't get rid of.

The Taskmaster

Haiku for November

Autumn moon shines bright
Heading South, the geese fly low
Dreams ride on their wings

Deadwood in Utah*

Photos by Christina & Scott Piatanes



* Normally this page is dedicated to the Upcoming Northern California Bonsai Events, but there are not any scheduled on the Golden State Bonsai Federation Website.

Bonsai Wire Newsletter Submissions:

The deadline for the Bonsai Wire Newsletter is the Saturday following the Clubs Monthly General Meeting.

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

Marin Bonsai Club Events

November 3, 2015: Workshop/Meeting,
Marin Society of Artists Building, 7 PM.
Free for members. \$10 for non-members.

November 14, 2015: Celebration of Bonsai,
3 PM to 9 PM, Ambrosia Restaurant, 850
College Avenue, Kentfield, Ca.

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

December ?, 2015: Holiday Party, Details
TBA.



2015 Marin Bonsai Club Officers:

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|--------------|-----------------|--------------|
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