

Eric Schrader Styling Demonstration

The Marin Bonsai Club held its in-person meeting on August 3, 2021, from 7:00 to 9:30 p.m. The meeting was held in Room #4, Terra Linda Community Center (TLCC), 670 Del Ganado Rd, San Rafael, CA. The demonstration was presented via Zoom for those members who were not able to attend the in-person meeting.

Eric Schrader of the Bonsai Society of San Francisco (BSSF) was the guest demonstrator. Eric demonstrated the styling of a Japanese Kishu juniper. The demo tree is fairly old and upright.

The club sold raffle tickets and conducted a raffle drawing for the demo juniper.

Eric Schrader started bonsai in 2002, after attending a show from the Bonsai Society of San Francisco. Eric grew up in rural Mendocino County, and loved hiking among the oaks and redwoods. While studying with Boon Manakativipart for 10 years, Eric developed a passion for starting bonsai trees from seeds and cuttings.

Check out Eric's website <https://www.bonsaify.com/>



Eric displayed a number of different styled Kishu junipers (*Juniperus chinensis* 'Kishu Shimpaku') at the beginning of his demonstration. One tree was a small formal upright with rather matured branches dropping down and a jin for the apex or top of the tree. Eric asked the audience why would a bonsai be styled with the branches dropping down towards the trunk base? A number of answers were given, including that is what's taught at beginners' workshops, aging characteristics and environmental impact such as heavy snow, wind, etc. But, Eric said all trees want to grow upward. At least in nature and during their early years. Eric made the point that styling bonsai does not have to follow a classic or traditional design. He preferred to allow the tree in providing the aesthetics or directional flow of how branches are wired into position.



Eric had the audience choose one of three juniper trees, all being Kishu, two formal upright and one slanted or potential raft style. The vote came to select the tallest of the formal upright trees. This demo tree showed a number of potential primary trunks. A front view was chosen with the dominant apical branch lowered and facing the viewer. Eric removed some of the competing upward branches to enhance the front view.

Eric used a cut and tear method in removing the competing branches, creating jins to conceal any tool marks. He also removed small amounts of foliage from the crotches and areas where the foliage was not wanted. Copper wire was used to create movement and position smaller branches.





With the wiring in place, the demo Kishu juniper was complete. Eric recommended a regular schedule of fertilizer and plenty of after care with the goal of the tree to regain its strength. He said in about two years the foliage should be very healthy, green and bushy with elongating terminal tips throughout the branches. At that time, additional styling would be appropriate.



Japanese Kishu juniper demo tree



Karen Marx purchased the winning raffle ticket and went home with the demo tree.