



*conejo valley*

# BONSAI society

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A member of the Golden State Bonsai Federation 

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## **Conejo Valley Bonsai Society Meetings**

Westlake Village City Hall  
Community Room  
31200 Oakcrest Drive  
Westlake Village, CA 91361  
**3<sup>rd</sup> Thursday of the Month**  
**7:30 PM – 9:00 PM**

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## **President's Message**

# **Look Ahead, Glance Back**

By Marj Branson

This month I want to look forward a few meetings, then look back a bit.

First, the future. For the Conejo Valley Bonsai Society's May meeting, we are trying something new: a peer critique.

All members are asked to bring in a tree; other members will critique it. You can bring new material for advice on initial styling. Or it can be an existing bonsai for some input on refinement. If you find this helpful, we will make it an annual activity.

Speaking of annual activities, I would like to remind everyone that during the August meeting (which will be a workshop), we will hold our yearly Swap Meet. So plan ahead and consider offering any bonsai or bonsai-related thing you want to part with. It can be an already styled and potted bonsai, raw material, pots, tools, books, you name it. Your unwanted item could be someone else's treasure.

Now a peek in the rear-view mirror: Our April meeting was a demonstration by Bob Pressler, who is a club member, the owner of Kimura Bonsai Nursery, and current president of the California Bonsai Society. In addition to his demonstration, Bob announced a new CBS initiative: \$200 Ben Oki Bonsai Scholarships for students of the art. Applications for this year are open until May 30, so see me at our next meeting for details—there's no time to waste.

Meanwhile, Bob's demo on styling a cedar tree made for a very busy night with good member participation. There was much deliberation on what style the tree should be. The details of his demo are in Ken Martin's feature (see page 4).

Just a few days after Bob's demonstration, we went on our first "nursery crawl" in some years. Suffice to say, it was a success for all attending. We visited both Bob's Kimura nursery in Northridge and Roy Nagatoshi's Fuji Bonsai Nursery in Sylmar. We all came away with bonsai material. The weather was perfect; it can sometimes be very warm walking around nurseries. It was interesting to see that both nurseries had more sun protection over their trees than in the past. Last year was very hot, so not only have we had to protect our trees in our home environments, but also it has been done by the nurseries. Good to know.

Next, I would like to remind members of our Niche Display program. During our April meeting, Mel Carrillo did an excellent presentation of his first niche display (see page 7). Mel went several steps beyond the minimum and added a second bonsai to create what's known as a three-point display. He even hung a seasonal scroll behind the bonsai.

It's not necessary to attain the same level of expertise as Mel displayed. The purpose of our niche display is to give members the opportunity to show a tree in an exhibit presentation format. That is, the bonsai tree on a stand and with an accent plant. (The scroll is optional.) This gives us all a chance to learn about your tree and your development or plan for it.

We also welcome presentations of works in progress. You can show a tree you are currently working on, and explain your thoughts for its development. Then other

*Continued on page 3*



**Marj Branson**

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# **CVBS Programs 2018**

**If you are interested in the CVBS Mentoring Program, please see  
Larry Kimmelman for more information & applications to participate.**

<del>January 18</del>	7:30 PM: Brief Meeting followed by Workshop— <b>BRING YOUR TREES</b>
<del>February 15</del>	7:30 PM: Brief Meeting followed by Workshop— <b>BRING YOUR TREES</b>
<del>March 15</del>	7:30 PM: Brief Meeting followed by <b>DEMONSTRATION: Ted Matson</b> / Group Planting
<del>April 19</del>	7:30 PM: Brief Meeting followed by <b>DEMONSTRATION: Bob Pressler</b> / Styling a Cedar
<del>April 21</del>	<b>ACTIVITY / FIELD TRIP: Nursery Crawl</b> Fuji Bonsai Nursery / Kimura Bonsai Nursery Members Only. See President's Message for details.
May 17	7:30 PM: Brief Meeting followed by Workshop and <b>PEER CRITIQUES—BRING YOUR TREES</b>
June 21	7:30 PM: Brief Meeting followed by <b>DEMONSTRATION: Ann Erb</b> / Pine Candling
July 19	7:30 PM: Brief Meeting followed by Workshop— <b>BRING YOUR TREES</b>
August 16	7:30 PM: Brief Meeting followed by Workshop and <b>Swap Meet—BRING YOUR TREES</b>
September 20	7:30 PM: Brief Meeting followed by <b>PEER CRITIQUES—BRING YOUR SHOW TREES</b>
October 6 – 7	<b>15TH ANNUAL CVBS EXHIBITION</b> Gardens of the World
October 18	7:30PM : Brief Meeting followed by <b>DEMONSTRATION: Cesareo Perez</b> / TBD
November 15	7:30 PM: Brief Meeting followed by Workshop— <b>BRING YOUR TREES</b>
December 20	7:30 PM <b>HOLIDAY POTLUCK, RAFFLE &amp; AUCTION</b>

# Getting Trees Ready for a Show

By Jim Barrett

**Editor's Note: Some CVBS members are also members of the Descanso Bonsai Society and may be preparing for its June show .**

If you plan to change pots, do it now. Remove the moss from trunks and major roots.

Scrub dirt and debris from the trunk, main branches, and main roots. Use a stiff nylon or soft brass brush. Remove dead needles on pine and junipers. If you are going to show black pine bonsai, wait until the last minute to remove all long (over 1/2 inch to 3/4 inch) candles. If you plan to cut the needles, wait until the day before the show.

Last-minute trimming is normally necessary on elms, maples, and other deciduous trees. Clean pots and wipe them with a clean cloth containing lemon oil or WD-40™. Try to remove water stains and scale. Display stands and slabs should be polished. Complementary plants, rocks, and other objects must also look their best.

When you bring your bonsai and other exhibit items to the show, bring some tools as well for last-minute touchup. There will be people there to assist you. The rain and warm weather last month was great for the trees—unfortunately it was great for bugs and fungus, too.

Spider mites on junipers and pines have been a big concern. Treat with Kelthane or Malathion/Volck oil combination if mites are suspected. Repeat application 10 days later to take care of the next generation. Aphids can be a problem on crab apple, quince, and other blooming trees. Junipers may also harbor aphids. If you see ants running up and down trunks and branches, chances are you have an aphid problem. Treat with Malathion or your preferred insecticide. Powdery mildew on crapemyrtle, maple, quince, and crab apple is showing up and can be treated with a good fungicide, such as Benomyl.

If you applied wire to deciduous trees last winter, check them soon. Remove the wire by cutting rather than trying to unwind it. Your fertilizing program should have started several months ago. Continue to vary the product if you can.

Do not feed azaleas if they are blooming. Wait until they are through. Repotting (pot-to-pot) can still be accomplished this month. 🌳



Jim Barrett

## President's Message (Continued from page 1)

members can chime in with suggestions and advice.

We encourage members to participate in our Niche Display program (see page 6 for the details). Please consider signing up at our next meeting.

May and June are busy bonsai show months, including the Bonsai Club of Santa Barbara this month and the Descanso Bonsai Society next month (see Barrett's Bonsai Tips above and Coming Events, page 8).

See you Thursday—May 17th. 🌳

## CVBS Membership

# Interested in CVBS?

The Conejo Valley Bonsai Society welcomes Damon DuBois and Wendy Rector of Simi Valley to the club. CVBS is open to anyone interested in the horticultural art of bonsai. If you are not a member, consider joining now. We meet monthly on the third Thursday of every month at the Westlake Village City Hall (31200 Oakcrest Drive, Westlake Village, CA 91361). Meetings start at 7:30 PM, and include occasional demonstrations by bonsai experts, workshops, critiques, and member swap meets.

It's inexpensive and easy to join. Annual dues are \$25 for one, or \$30 for couples. Simply bring cash or a check (made payable to the Conejo Valley Bonsai Society) to our next monthly meeting. You may also mail a check to: Larry Kimmelman, CVBS Membership Chair, 2727 Autumn Ridge Drive, Thousand Oaks, CA 91362.

—Larry Kimmelman

## Refreshments

# Celebrate May!

Spring has sprung! It's the Merry month of May. The month we celebrate our Mothers, the Armed Forces, our Veterans, and if you live in Canada, Queen Victoria.

May is also the month that Nancy Smeets volunteered to bring cold beverages and Dick Wilson something yummy to munch to our May 17th meeting.

Looking ahead, we need someone to bring cold beverages to the meeting in June. August, September and November need volunteers for both beverages and snacks. October has an opening for someone to bring cold drinks. If you haven't volunteered in 2018, you still have an opportunity to join in the festivities.

You know the drill: sign up on the Refreshment list at the next meeting or contact me at refreshments@cvbs-bonsai.org.

See you on the 17th.

—Denise Snavely

2018 Refreshments		
	Cold Drinks	Eats / Sweets
May	Nancy Smeets	Dick Winston
June	Volunteer Needed	Denise Snavely
July	Ben Conway	Denise Snavely
Aug.	Volunteer Needed	Volunteer Needed
Sep.	Volunteer Needed	Volunteer Needed
Oct.	Volunteer Needed	Mike Blumenberg

# Pressler Bends, Styles an Atlas Cedar

By Ken Martin

Atlas cedars are nice conifers that can be developed in many different bonsai styles. Also, they are native to the Atlas Mountains in North Africa, so are tough and used to a desert climate such as ours. Indeed, if anything, they are susceptible to over watering.

That's the upshot of the Conejo Valley Bonsai Society's April 19, 2018, meeting, when it hosted a demonstration by Bob Pressler. Owner of Kimura Bonsai Nursery in Northridge, CA, and a member of the club, Bob chose to revisit an Atlas cedar that he had worked on at a CVBS meeting a year ago.

Bob said that cedars are usually grafted, but this 12- to 14-year-old tree was grown from seed from a tree in Bob's yard. Nonetheless, he pointed out, this particular specimen is not great material. The trunk is rather uninteresting because it is straight with little taper. Moreover, the nebari is unremarkable—although

**Bob Pressler works on the top of his Atlas cedar (below) after removing all the lower branches. Note the straight trunk, lack of significant taper in the trunk, and the small nebari.**



**“We tend to overemphasize taper. It’s not always necessary.”**

better than it was when he last worked on this tree for our club.

In that earlier demonstration, Bob showed attendees how to correct a number of issues with the tree's roots. The specimen had some crossing and circling roots, which Bob straightened. He essentially bare-rooted one-half of the root ball. He also removed some top roots, which made the nebari look a little wider. Also at that time, he said the roots on the other half should be addressed in

two years' time.

Now, the tree still has a small nebari and very little taper, although on the positive side it has plenty of branches. Like many cedars, it has a multi-branched top that could be developed rounded or flat. Also, he pointed out that many trees in nature don't have much taper. “We tend to overemphasize taper,” Bob said. “It's not always necessary.”

Bob has owned Kimura since 1996. He first studied in the early 1970s with Frank Okamura at the Brooklyn Botanical gardens. In 1984, he moved to California and met John Naka, Ben Oki, and the whole group of Southern California bonsai masters. Bob encountered Kenji Myata at a 2001 convention, and now continues his studies with Kenji. In addition to being a member of CVBS, Bob is currently president of the California Bonsai Society. He is also a member of John Naka's club, Nanpuki.

After saying that he had been mulling over how to style this tree for some time, Bob asked the audience for suggestions.

One suggestion was a formal upright. The lack of any real taper and the interesting growth near the top of the tree made this not really desirable. Bunjin or literati style was suggested. Bob said that style would require putting a lot of bends in the trunk, which he didn't want to do. Cascade and semi-cascade also were mentioned as possibilities.

Bob said that the way to approach bonsai styling decisions was to follow a sequence of observations: First, find the base or nebari. Second, find the front. And third, select the line of the trunk. But, he said, in practice he often doesn't decide what to do until he starts working on the material.

A discussion ensued as to where the front of the tree should be. Bob said normally it is where the nebari appears the widest and the first branch is in a good position. He tentatively selected a front and marked it with a chopstick in the soil.

Still no styling decision had been made, so Bob started cleaning out material in crotches and elsewhere that he knew wouldn't be needed. After thinking a bit, he chopped off a couple of lower branches, looked at the result, cut a few more branches leaving jins, and finally removed all lower branches. The decision had been made! (Bob brought raffia and a trunk bending tool, so it could be that he kind of knew what the style was going to be all along.)

Bob wrapped the top of the tree in wet raffia, making sure there were no gaps—there's a danger of a break in the trunk or branch being bent if there's a gap in the raffia. Although primary-

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Photos by David Williams



(Continued from page 4)

ly to protect the trunk, he said when dry, the raffia will add some stiffness. He used a heavy aluminum wire (5 mm) around the area to be bent.

After the upper trunk was wrapped in raffia and wired, Bob used the trunk-bending tool to introduce a sharp bend in the upper trunk. Once he had the desired angle, he used a small diameter guy wire anchored to the larger wire to hold the top in place.

Cedars, however, are notorious for not holding shape, Bob said. So he recommends leaving the wire on as much as two years—even allowing it to cut into the bark a bit. Over numerous years and multiple wirings, a cedar will hold its new shape for a time, but will have to be wired again after a few months. Also, he said he wished he'd brought some copper wire as it is stronger and would have been more effective holding the cedar in its new shape with a smaller wire.

Bob wired the remaining upper branches into a Chinese penjing literati style: long thin trunk (although straight) and sparse foliage on top. Typically, such a styled tree would be put in a round or round rustic pot, but for this tree Bob said a square pot might be better.

For the next stage of this bonsai's development, Bob said he will let the current foliage tips grow to strengthen the tree—it will be shaggy, but there's plenty of foliage to cut back to later. "You have to let trees grow," he said: "They won't always look perfect."

All-in-all the result is a very attractive tree that in the future would look good in a small round or square pot, Bob said. Another excellent and informative demonstration in a continuing series from Bob Pressler. 🌲

**Bob tested the flexibility of the cedar's upper branches and trunk (top left) before attempting to bend the trunk.**

**Near the end of the demonstration, Bob fine tunes the foliage (bottom left). Note the radical bend in the trunk near the apex.**

CVBS Niche Displays

# Our Niche Display Program

In the Niche Program, club members set up a mini exhibition display. Such a display consists of:

- The tree in a nice bonsai pot
- An accent plant
- A stand

All these items are important to create the balance for a good display. We aspire to present the best display possible for everyone’s pleasure and edification, so the niche is often assembled by one of the more experienced members. However, it is also our desire to give less experienced bonsai hobbyists an opportunity to learn by doing. So if any less experienced member feels his/her trees are not ready for a finished display, it is worthwhile to create a display that is a work-in-progress. It will be up to the club member to determine which category her/his display falls into, and then the work-in-progress display can become the talking point of work done, work intended, and suggestions from the floor.

We encourage all members to sign up for the niche display! Please have a look at your 2018 calendar and let us know when you would like to present your display.

—Marj Branson

2018 Niche Displays	
May	Ken Martin
June	Nancy Smeets
July	David Whiteside
August	Volunteer Needed
Sept.	Volunteer Needed
Oct.	Larry Kimmelman

Library

# Check Out the CVBS Library

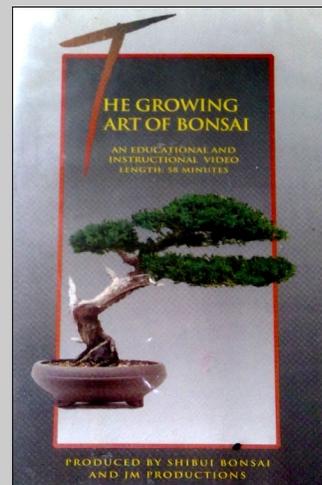
The Conejo Valley Bonsai Society has an extensive library of books, magazines, and DVDs available for members to borrow at no charge. The collection is available for your review at each monthly meeting. Material may be borrowed for a month at a time, so take home a book or DVD from our next meeting and return it at the following meeting. If you have any questions regarding the CVBS Library, please contact me at [librarian@cvbs-bonsai.org](mailto:librarian@cvbs-bonsai.org).

### Book of the Month

*The Growing Art of Bonsai* produced by Shibui Bonsai and JM Productions.

This newsletter issue’s Book of the Month is actually a DVD: *The Growing Art of Bonsai*. The CVBS library has a good selection of videos that supplement our book collection. This particular video “teaches you how to appreciate the artistic principles of bonsai design” and demonstrates many of the techniques to create and maintain your own bonsai. It provides a thorough overview in less than an hour and would be a good introduction for someone just learning the art of bonsai.

—Mike Blumenberg



# Bonsai Volunteers Needed at the Huntington Gardens

Ted Matson is busy at the Huntington Gardens organizing the work on and upgrading the bonsai trees in both the Golden State Bonsai Federation’s collection and the Huntington’s own collection. This is an ongoing task—so anyone who would like to volunteer, there are opportunities and your help would be greatly appreciated. There are no restrictions as to your level of bonsai knowledge—all levels are welcome. Ted has many tasks that need to be done. In some instances, he has mini teaching sessions, so no one feels overextended.

“This year, we can start allowing people to park up at the Ikebana House lot as there are no conflicts up there and it also frees up the public parking for other events/activities,” Ted said.

If you are interested, please let me know or contact Ted at [tmatson@earthlink.net](mailto:tmatson@earthlink.net).

—Marj Branson

2018 Work Dates
<del>January 20 – 21</del>
<del>February 17 – 18</del>
<del>March 10 – 11</del>
<del>April 14 – 15</del>
May 19 – 20

# Three-Point Bonsai Display

**Editor's Note:** Mel Carrillo provided this formal three-point display for the niche exhibit at CVBS's April 2018 meeting. Here's what Mel says about his display.

This was the first time I have attempted to display any of my trees. I was nervous but figured that you have to start somewhere. I decided to prepare a traditional 3-point display using principles I have learned over the last year of my bonsai practice.

To the far right is a procumbens Nana juniper (*Juniperus procumbens* "Nana"), named "Otosan," which is Japanese for "Father." It is my second bonsai, and was a surprise gift from my family last Father's Day.

To the far left is a shohin sized Seju elm (*Ulmus parvifolia* "Seju") resting in a rectangular, cream, oatmeal glazed Japanese pot. Its bark is beginning to show its age as it starts to cork over. It sits on an elevated display stand for ease of viewing and to create some visual drama by playing with the changes in height throughout the composition.

The kusamono, or accent planting, was created by combining moss, a perennial called Bacopa, and a statice plant. The idea was to illustrate the spring season using a flowering planting. I chose the Bacopa for its towering and elegant pinkish-purple blooms.

The Seju elm and kusamono were positioned to point, lean, or communicate towards "Otosan."

To further support the fact that Spring is here, I decided to hang a Japanese scroll depicting a delicate flowering plum.

—Mel Carrillo



Photo by David Williams

**2018**

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**May**

**May 5 – 6, 2018 Gardena, California**

Dai Ichi Bonsai Kai: 33rd Annual Bonsai Exhibit & Sale “Serenity through Bonsai.” Ken Nakaoka Community Center, 1670 W. 162nd Street. Show hours are 10 AM – 4 PM. The show features an exhibition and sales area. Saturday events: beginner's workshop, round-robin demonstration, private dinner reception (open to all SoCal bonsai club members), and our club auction. Sunday events: Saikei demonstration by Frank Goya. The public is welcome and admission and parking is free.

**May 19 – 20, 2018 Santa Barbara, California**

Bonsai Club of Santa Barbara: Annual Bonsai Exhibition and plant sale in Fellowship Hall at Trinity Lutheran Church, 909 N. La Cumbre, (Corner of Foothill Rd.). Hours are 11:00 AM - 4:00 PM Saturday and 10 AM - 4 PM Sunday with demonstrations by Ann Erb and Mel Ikeda. Free admission. For more information, contact Joe Olson 805-964-0869, email joeyuccaseed@verizon.net, or visit [www.santabarbarbonsai.org](http://www.santabarbarbonsai.org).

**May 19 – 20, 2018 Oakland, California**

Bay Area Satsuki Aikokai (BASA): 23rd Annual Satsuki Azalea Bonsai Show, Lakeside Park Garden Center, 666 Bellevue Ave. Show hours are 10 AM – 5 PM Saturday and 10 AM – 4 PM Sunday with demonstration by Johnny Uchida Saturday 1 – 3 PM (Demonstration tree to be raffled). Beginning bonsai workshop Sunday 1 – 3 PM limited space available, \$20 fee and sign-up required. Participating vendors – North American Satsuki Bonsai Center – Rick Garcia and Shojuen – Darren and Laura Wong. Free admission. Public parking available. For more information contact George Haas at [gwhaas@comcast.net](mailto:gwhaas@comcast.net) or visit BASA website <http://satsukiazaleabonsai.org>.

**May 19 – 20, 2018 Sacramento, California**

Satsuki Aikokai Association: Annual show held at Shepard Garden Center 3330 McKinley Blvd. Show hours are 10 AM - 5 PM Saturday and 10 AM – 4 PM Sunday with demonstrations at 1:30 PM both days by botanist and bonsai nurseryman Yuzo Maruyama. Create your own azalea bonsai class at 11 AM both days. Raffles, vendors and Satsuki information booth. Free entrance and parking. For more information contact: Ronn Pigram (916) 428 8505 or email - [satsukiaikokaisac@sbcglobal.net](mailto:satsukiaikokaisac@sbcglobal.net)

**May 20, 2018 Van Nuys, California**

Sansui Kai of Southern California: Annual Bonsai Show and Sale, Japanese Garden, Tillman Water Reclamation Center, 6100 Woodley Ave. Hours are 10 AM - 4 PM with demonstrations at 1PM. Entry fee \$5 to show and garden. There will be bonsai trees for sale as well as bonsai related things (pots, stones etc.).

**June**

**June 2 – 3, 2018 San Mateo, California**

Sei Boku Bonsai Kai: 35th Annual Show at the San Mateo Garden Center, 605 Parkside Way (next to Beresford Park). Show hours are 10 AM - 4 PM both days with demonstration by Jonas Dupuich from 1 – 3 PM Saturday and Noon – 3 PM Sunday a workshop led by Jonas. Demo tree will be raffled off and one of the workshop trees will be raffled at the conclusion. Large club member plant sale, vendors, door prizes and our always popular raffles. Admission is free. Dr. Bonsai will be available to offer styling and care tips. For more information contact Marsha Mekisich at [eclectic.gardener@yahoo.com](mailto:eclectic.gardener@yahoo.com).

**June 16 – 17, 2018, La Cañada Flintridge, California**

Descanso Bonsai Society: 49th Annual Show at the Descanso Gardens, 1418 Descanso Drive, La Cañada Flintridge, CA, 91011. Setup on the 15th from 10 AM on for anyone who wants to help out. Demonstrations 11 AM and 1 PM both days. Reception Saturday at 6 PM. Raffle and auction 7:30 PM Saturday evening. Sales table with bonsai and bonsai-related items.

**August**

**August 25 – 26, 2018, Santa Rosa, California**

Redwood Empire Bonsai Society (REBS): 35th Annual show at the Santa Rosa Veterans Memorial Building, 1351 Maple Avenue. Show hours are 10 AM to 5 PM on Saturday and 10 AM to 4 PM on Sunday with demonstration by Bonsai Master Artist Kathy Shaner from 1 to 3 PM both days. Demo trees will be raffled. See the largest bonsai exhibition. Large bonsai vendor and member sales. Exciting silent auctions or “buy it now”. Free refreshments by the Bonsai café. Free admission and parking. For more information visit our website [www.rebsbonsai.org](http://www.rebsbonsai.org) or contact Bob Shimon at (707) 884-4126 or [shimon@mcn.org](mailto:shimon@mcn.org).

**September**

**September 22, 2018 San Andreas, California**

Mother Lode Bonsai Club: 4th Annual Bonsai Exhibition at the San Andreas Public Library, 1299 Gold Hunter Road (off Mt. Ranch Rd.). Show hours are 10 AM - 4 PM with demonstration by bonsai artist Joan Scroggs at 1 PM and benefit prize drawing immediately following. Vendor and member bonsai-related items will be available for sale. Open to the public with free admission and parking. For more info, contact Richard McKinstry (209) 288-2330 or email [richardwandr@aol.com](mailto:richardwandr@aol.com). Visit club website at [www.motherlodebonsai.org](http://www.motherlodebonsai.org).