



Conejo Valley Bonsai Society

A member of the Golden State Bonsai Federation

Graphic by Paul Centeno © Conejo Valley Bonsai Society

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President's Message

A Meeting with Design in Mind

By Ken Fuentes

We had a full program at the April meeting. The Novice Class on "Basics of Design" taught by Ken Martin was excellent. Ken provided examples of proper design on a variety of bonsai, which generated a lot of excellent questions from the class.

We talked more about how we can put what we have learned into action for our May meeting, so the Novice Workshop starting at 6:00 PM will create formal or informal upright style trees. We were not able to acquire a matching set of junipers for the workshop, so participants please bring the most appropriate material you have; This material ideally would be a juniper or any other soft-wooded variety that would lend itself to branch manipulation. We will have some junipers available for those who do not have appropriate material.

These hands-on workshops are essential to put your new knowledge into practice, so I hope to see all of our novices and beginners at this workshop.

During April's main meeting, Ted Matson did a demonstration, which was "Part 2" of designing David Whiteside's boxwood (see story, pages 4 – 6). The presentation was loaded with information not only on

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President Ken Fuentes



April Niche Exposed Root Ficus

The niche display for our April meeting was provided by Larry Kimmelman. Larry showed a *Ficus thonningii* (sometimes *microcarpa* or *retusa*), also known as Chinese Banyan or laurel fig, which he has developed in the exposed root style (see detail).

We plan to have a niche display at every meeting. For future niche displays, we would like every member to contribute. It's fun and good experience developing a formal presentation.

—Marj Branson

Photos by Shig Hayashi

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(Click on E-mail to create a message.)

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Conejo Valley

Bonsai Society

Meeting Place

Westlake Village City Hall
Community Room
31200 Oakcrest Drive
Westlake Village, CA 91361

Meeting Time

7:30 PM – 9:00 PM
3RD Thursday of every month
Note: Novice Classes &
Workshops start at 6:00 PM

CVBS Programs

2010

January 21	6:00 PM Novice Workshop 7:30 PM Brief Meeting followed by Workshop— BRING YOUR TREES
February 18	6:00 PM Novice Class: Bonsai History & Styles 7:30 PM Brief Meeting followed by DEMONSTRATION: Bob Pressler / Transplanting trees
March 18	6:00 PM Novice Workshop 7:30 PM Brief Meeting followed by Workshop— BRING YOUR TREES
April 15	6:00 PM Novice Class: Basics of Design 7:30 PM Brief Meeting followed by DEMONSTRATION: Ted Matson / Boxwood
May 20	6:00 PM Novice Workshop 7:30 PM Brief Meeting followed by Workshop— BRING YOUR TREES
June 17	6:00 PM Novice Class: Shaping with Wire 7:30 PM Brief Meeting followed by DEMONSTRATION: Ann Erb / Azaleas
July 15	6:00 PM Novice Workshop 7:30 PM Brief Meeting followed by Workshop— BRING YOUR TREES
August 19	6:00 PM Novice Class: Soils & Fertilizers 7:30 PM Brief Meeting followed by DEMONSTRATION: Jim Barrett / Black pine
September 16	6:00 PM Novice Workshop 7:30 PM Brief Meeting followed by Workshop— BRING YOUR TREES
October 2 – 3	7TH ANNUAL EXHIBITION Gardens of the World
October 21	6:00 PM Novice Class: Potting & Repotting 7:30 PM Brief Meeting followed by DEMONSTRATION: Cesareo Perez / Subject TBA
November 18	6:00 PM Novice Workshop 7:30 PM Brief Meeting followed by Workshop— BRING YOUR TREES
December 16	HOLIDAY POTLUCK

May: Start Fertilizing Some Species

By Jim Barrett

Satsuki azaleas should be nearly through blooming this month. If your azalea has an established shape, now is a good time to clean out extra and unwanted growth. Trim for form and style.

Make sure all seed pods are removed as soon as possible. Leaving the seed pods to mature tends to weaken the tree and new growth is likely to be weak. Azaleas can be repotted now. Protect any newly potted plants from direct sun for a week or so.

Deciduous trees such as elm, Japanese and trident maples, liquidambars, etc., should have slowed down by now. Trim all new twigs to one or two sets of leaves. Pay attention to the way new buds point, and trim for direction. Established bonsai should be developing the ramification needed to create the illusion of a mature tree. Remember that most deciduous trees in nature develop soft outlines and rounded apexes. Trim accordingly.

Fertilize trees that develop flower buds in early summer (such as crab apple, quince, ume, and wisteria) with low-nitrogen, phosphate-rich fertilizer. Repeat throughout the summer at least two more times.

Powdery mildew is already showing up on maples, crepe myrtle, and quince. Spray with Benomyl or a good fungicide that is recommended for mildew.

If your black pine candles turn brown at the very tip, chances are that pine-tip moth grubs are active. Pick off the brown end and inspect the inside. You should find the grub, a pupae, or the pupae case. Destroy the critter and dispose of the candle tip. Since this grub lives inside the candle, only a systemic poison is effective. Cygon-2, Borer Control, or a systemic rose insecticide in granular form might work.

Pay special attention to water schedules. Gloomy June days can be deceiving

when it comes to watering needs of our plants.

Continue your fertilizing program, especially for black pine and juniper.

Canada pruning programs will vary for ordinary

black pine, depending on the age and health of the tree. Candle pruning nursery stock can be started earlier than black pine that has been in a bonsai container for some time. For instance, nursery stock may have their candles pruned this month from about mid-month on. The object is to produce shorter internodes and an abundance of branches.

Bonsai black pine, depending again on maturity and health, may have the candle pruning program start as early as late May or as late as mid-July. The later you prune, the shorter the internodes.

Needle plucking is a personal choice and, if done, should not be done on a weak, unhealthy tree. If you have questions regarding black pine maintenance, ask your instructor or an experienced member of the club.

Continue to watch for critters and fungus. Wait to fertilize azaleas until they are through blooming. You should be able to repot ficus, pomegranate, and Atlas cedar any time now. If you need to repot elm and maple, make sure the new growth has hardened somewhat and try not to remove too many fine roots. You may find trident maples have developed a thick pad of roots on the bottom of the root ball. ☺



Jim Barrett

(Continued from page 1)

boxwoods but all bonsai.

Ted used a rotary tool to do some wood carving. With some angle adjustments, which Ted and David will make when they repot the boxwood during an early 2011 demonstration for us, the results will be fantastic. As David told Ken Martin for this month's story, he plans to commis-

sion a custom pot for this boxwood with Jim Barrett. In addition to being an expert bonsai practitioner, teacher, and demonstrator, Barrett also is a potter widely recognized for his specialty, bonsai pots.

Speaking of pots, in the near future we are planning a field trip to visit both Bruce and Yaeko Hisayasu's pottery business in Pasadena and Jim Barrett's nursery/pottery studio in Arcadia. ☺

Refreshments

Mom's Day Joy

By Bob Stradling

Hi everybody. Hope all had a Happy Mother's Day. Come to think of it, has anyone ever had a bad Mother's Day? I don't think that's allowed. Mothers are great. After all, where would we be without them?

This month, the refreshments will be taken care of by Grace Sy with cold drinks and Mamata Gokhale with cookies and pastries. I will try to remember to give you both a call a night or two before the May 20th meeting. If either of you are unable to bring the goodies, please contact me so I will be able to cover you.

If anybody wishes to volunteer for future meetings (July until the end of the year is open), please see me, Bob Stradling, at the next meeting, contact me at r1strad@verizon.net, or call me at (805) 558-5206. Below is our current schedule of volunteers.

And thank you all for volunteering in the past and in the future. ☺

	Cold Drinks	Cookies/ Pastries
2010		
May	Grace Sy	Mamata Gokhale
June	Evans Thomas	Frank Greenway
July	Volunteer Needed	Evans Thomas
Aug.	Volunteer Needed	Volunteer Needed
Sep.	Volunteer Needed	Volunteer Needed
Oct.	Volunteer Needed	Volunteer Needed
Nov.	Volunteer Needed	Volunteer Needed

Ted Matson Revisits Whiteside Boxwood

By Ken Martin

Editor's note: At our April 2009 meeting, Ted Matson worked on what he believes is either an English or Japanese boxwood (*Buxus sempervirens 'Suffruticosa'* or *B. microphylla japonica*, respectively) that was donated to the club. (The donor didn't provide species data.) During that demonstration, Ted established the box's structure and did the initial restyling. This boxwood was auctioned off at our 2009 holiday party; this editor made the winning bid—and promised to bring the tree back for future demonstrations. During 2009, I did minimal work on the tree: a little pinching, removing wire, etc. At his April 2010 demonstration, Ted started working on the tree's deadwood. In 2011, the tree and Ted Matson will make another a joint appearance—this time to move the boxwood into a bonsai pot that I plan to have Jim Barrett make for it.

Ted Matson was the demonstrator at the Conejo Valley Bonsai Society's April 2010 meeting. Ted used David Whiteside's 22-inch tall boxwood as a demonstration tree for the second time. It is currently potted in a round training pot (see photos at right). After last year's heavy pruning and wiring, the tree has thrived, putting forth abundant new foliage.

Ted said that boxwoods have interesting habits as they have characteristics of both deciduous and evergreen trees. There is chlorophyll in the stems and as a result you can cut all the leaves and it will pop out everywhere. He cautioned, however, that if you leave some leaves in a section of the tree and take off leaves in other sections, it probably won't rebud where the leaves were removed.

Ted said this tree has popped buds everywhere since he worked on it last. All trees, and this one is no exception, try to access as much light as possible. Matson said that the ideal is to open the tree up and reveal forks, clean up bottoms of branches, and clean up notches between branches. This will establish a good framework for the next generation of buds. In addition, to support the illusion of age, it's best to leave branches of the same generation at even length; this will help produce a consistent pattern of bud growth. The idea is to make the tree look 100 years old by trimming internode lengths to cause forks on forks on forks.

Ted removed the flower and seed pods from this tree; boxes will produce seed pods in lieu of green stems if the insignificant flowers aren't removed. Boxwoods are good material for bonsai, he explained, because they thrive in landscapes in virtually every state. Thirty-year old boxes can be collected easily. Look for folks tearing out old hedges.

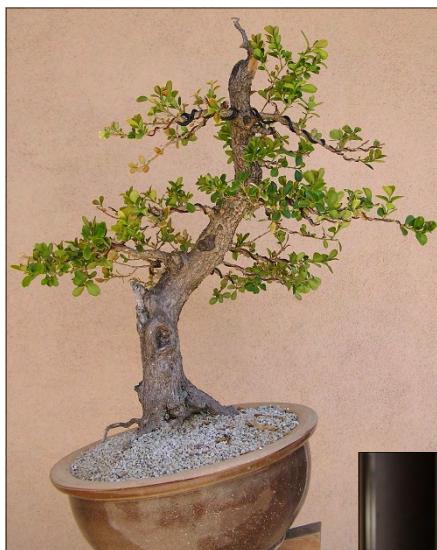
When trimming boxwoods, you need to trim the interior branches as well as give the exterior shape a "haircut." When trimming a tree for a show, Ted pointed out, a neat trick is to shine a light through the tree to a plain backdrop to "flatten" the tree and show where areas of dark and light are. If the tree has a pleasing silhouette, you've done your job well.

Right now, Ted says, this tree has "one note"—up and to the right. He put beanbags under the right side of the tree to



Ted Matson (above) explains his plan for Whiteside's boxwood at the CVBS April 2010 meeting. The box prior to the 2009 demo (right) and after (below), tilted to the angle it will be in its new pot (in 2011). One year later, at the beginning of Matson's 2010 demonstration (bottom right), the tree has pushed new foliage.

Photos: 2009 before by Verna Murrell and after by David Whiteside; 2010 before and all other photos in this article by Shig Hayashi.



bring the apex over the nebari to negate the one-note aspect. This is the angle the tree should be repotted to (see photo above). It will make the tree flow and be much more interesting. Very

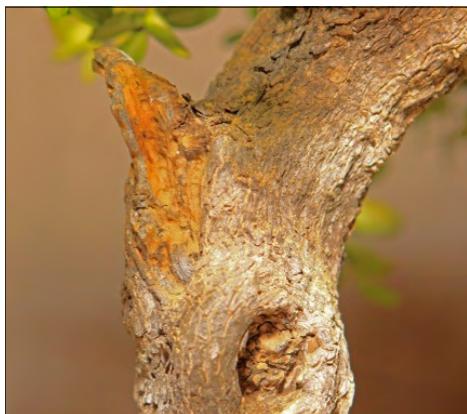
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This boxwood already had some naturally occurring deadwood. One was a stubby jin about midway up the trunk (photo left); this had too much mass and no interesting shape. Using his rotary tool, Matson addressed both problems (three photos below and below left and right).



This tree has many knots where branches have been removed, making for another interesting feature (two photos below and below left). Some of these don't need any work—in fact, any work could harm them—while



others need some shaping. Note the stippling effect in two knots, one in each of the photos.



(Continued from page 4)

important: Any bonsai should be worked on at the final contemplated potting angle.

All movement in a tree is in a transition zone. The first transition zone is in the nebari, the second at the first branch, and another near the top. There shouldn't be too abrupt a transition at any point.

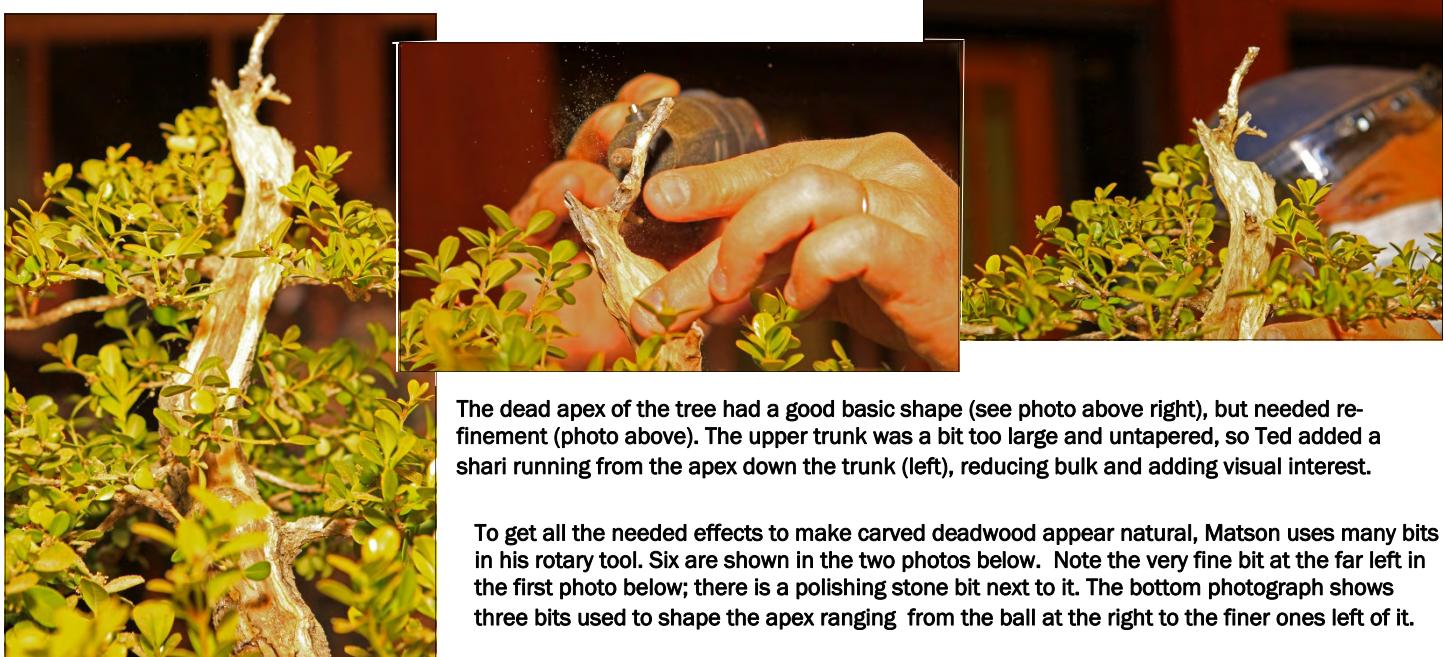
Ted then got out his carving tools, chief among them a rotary power tool and an array of bits (see photos page 6). He explained that the plan is to carve the deadwood near the top of this tree as well as create some shari and work on some of the knots. The purpose of carving is to accelerate nature, so there are reasons to carve:

1. Reduce the mass of wood where it is too heavy
2. Shape and taper wood
3. Texture the surface

What kinds of bonsai can have jins and shari? "Let's look at nature," Matson said. Hardwoods in a low-altitude, moderate-humidity forest grow straight and tall and have little deadwood.

Pines and junipers that grow at higher elevations tend to have more empty space around them and live in less humidity—but endure freezing high winds and snow loads, which produce natural deadwood. But not all pines have natural deadwood. For example, Japanese black pines (*Pinus thunbergii*) grow in their native environment at lower elevations where it is fairly humid; these trees have little natural deadwood. If you are true to the story you wish to tell with a black pine bonsai, it should not have a lot of dead wood, Ted explained. On the other hand, oaks that grow in our foothills have a lot of natural deadwood, and this boxwood is designed to depict an oak. Like an oak, boxes have hard wood, so the jins and sharis will last a long time.

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The dead apex of the tree had a good basic shape (see photo above right), but needed refinement (photo above). The upper trunk was a bit too large and untapered, so Ted added a shari running from the apex down the trunk (left), reducing bulk and adding visual interest.

To get all the needed effects to make carved deadwood appear natural, Matson uses many bits in his rotary tool. Six are shown in the two photos below. Note the very fine bit at the far left in the first photo below; there is a polishing stone bit next to it. The bottom photograph shows three bits used to shape the apex ranging from the ball at the right to the finer ones left of it.

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During the snack break, Ted did a lot of carving with a carbide wheel. He did catch some live wood, but he was very careful not to undercut a living branch. He put more curves in the dead top.

He used a bit shaped like a ball first, next a medium pointed tip, then a sharply pointed tip to get variation in the grooves. The second and third tool will accentuate the curves. Use a smaller bit yet for stippling and a tiny diamond bit for character lines. Dead wood should look like it has been exposed to the elements such as blowing sand, ice, sun, low humidity, etc. As a finishing touch, Ted used a polishing stone bit to go over surfaces to remove tool marks.

Ted posed the question: lime sulfur or no on a boxwood? The lime sulfur mineralizes the dead wood to prevent decay, so the answer is yes—but the stark white result is not natural for a box or an oak. To counteract this, he recommended putting lime sulfur on deadwood two to three months after carving, then follow that with a solution of $\frac{1}{4}$ cup of water with five to seven drops of India ink. This will make the surface a more natural gray. The India ink solution can be made a little darker then applied to the deep crevasses for further definition.

Some of the jin and shari on this tree are to the back. These features in the back make the whole tree more interesting in that the viewer wonders what has happened to the tree. The bonsai artist needs to do a thorough presentation of a tree so it has an interesting view from all sides, not just from the front.

This tree, Ted feels, belongs in a rectangular pot. He likes ochre (off yellow) for boxwoods.

For this tree, a dark blue pot or dark blue with orange

streaks to pick up the winter color in the leaves would also

One fault in the boxwood is the barbed branches near the apex (below).

There is no way to fix this, so Ted ran a shari between the two branch bases to distract the eye (right).



Ted said boxes can be repotted anytime there's a growth spurt, which happens four to five times a year. With the coarse, sharp, porous soil this tree is in, the roots should be like cotton, which is good. When a root hits a sharp piece of soil (Dry Stall or scoria), he explained, it splits into more, finer roots. The result is a healthy root system and tree. Ted said some people have had good results with boxwoods using citrus and avocado fertilizer (12-5-8), which is relatively cheap at home gardening stores.

A general rule for all trees is use a low dose of fertilizer frequently. This will tend to keep the tree growing at a steady rate. Ted also said a time-release fertilizer is used up faster than the advertised time. 

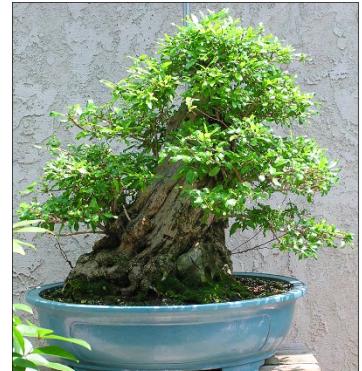


Club Event

Visit to Nguy Nursery and Collection

On Saturday, April 24, several carloads of CVBS members visited the nursery and private bonsai collection owned by David and June Nguy. The couple owns West America, the well-known importer of bonsai pots, tools, wire, and many other bonsai-related items. David and June also are expert bonsai practitioners and very popular as demonstrators. They have honored CVBS numerous times with their

informative and entertaining demonstrations. They are generous supporters of the bonsai community.



At their nursery, we saw a fabulous array of recently collected California junipers (top far right) as well as many pre-bonsai pines, junipers, and other species (above far right). David chatted with Ken Fuentes and Larry Kimmelman (top). June discussed some fine points of bonsai with our group (above) while we visited their private collection outside their home (photos right and below).

Photos and text by David Whiteside



CVBS Memberships

CVBS—A Bonsai Club For Everyone!

By Marj Branson

Please welcome new member Elliott Farkas of Chatsworth, who joined the club at our April meeting. Elliott is

active in several Southern California bonsai clubs and currently studies with Ted Matson.

If you are new to the Conejo Valley Bonsai Society—as a visitor to our Web site, reader of our newsletter, a guest at a meeting, or already decided to join the club—there are virtually no barriers to entry. Our annual dues are only \$20.00 for a single person, \$25.00 for couples.

We meet on the third Thursday of each month, starting at 7:30 PM, in the Westlake Village City Hall at 31200 Oakcrest Drive, Westlake Village, CA 91361. You can bring your check to the next meeting, or mail it to me at 1169 Triunfo Canyon Road, Westlake Village, CA 91361.

Please make the check payable to Conejo Valley Bonsai Society.

Coming Events

May

May 15-16 / Santa Barbara

California Bonsai Club of Santa Barbara: Annual Bonsai Exhibition at the Santa Barbara Botanic Garden, 1212 Mission Canyon Road. Hours are Saturday, 11:00 AM – 4:00 PM and Sunday, 10:00 AM – 4:00 PM. Demonstration at 1:00 PM both days. Plant sales by club members; native plants suitable for bonsai in the Botanic Garden's Nursery; and bonsai books and other gifts in the Garden Shop. For information, contact Ann Erb (805) 929-4972, email annerb@charter.net or visit www.santabarbarabonsai.org.

May 15-16 / Encino, California

Sansui-Kai of Southern California: Annual Bonsai Exhibition in conjunction with the Los Angeles Department of Recreation and Parks, Country Garden Fair at the Sepulveda Garden Center, 16633 Magnolia Boulevard. Hours are 9:00 AM – 5:00 PM daily. Plant sales, gardening arts, good food and entertainment galore. Admission is free. For directions go to www.sansui-kai.com or for more information contact Michael Jonas, (818) 775-0813.

May 15 – 16 / Sacramento, California

Satsuki Aikokai of Sacramento: 40th Annual Show at Shepard Garden and Arts Center, 3330 McKinley Blvd. Hours are Saturday, 10:00 AM – 5:00 PM and Sunday, 10:00 AM – 4:00 PM. For information contact Satsukiaikokaisac@sbcglobal.net or Ron Pigram, (916) 428-8505.

May 22-23 / Anaheim, California

Orange County Bonsai Society: 47th Annual Bonsai Exhibit at the Orange County Buddhist Church, 909 South Dale Avenue. Exhibition hours are 10:30 AM – 4:00 PM both days. Demonstration at 1:00 PM each day followed by a benefit raffle. Bonsai pots, tools and accessories, along with books and plants will be on sale. Contact ocbonsai@gmail.com or Ken Schlothan, (714) 553-7516, for more information.

May 22 – 23 / Sacramento, California

American Bonsai Association: 51st Annual Show and Sale. Hours are 10:00 AM – 4:30 PM, at the Shepard Garden & Arts Center, 3330 McKinley Boulevard. Hands-on workshops for all levels from novice to advanced enthusiasts; large member and vendor sales areas; raffles and door prizes. Demonstration daily at 1:30 PM by Ryan Neil, who recently returned from an apprenticeship in Japan with Bonsai Master Masahiko Kimura. Free admission. For further information contact Greg McDonald, (530) 642-2521, or ggregandleeanne@comcast.net.

May 22 – 23 / Oakland, California

Bay Area Satsuki Aikokai: 16th Annual Satsuki Bonsai Show at the Lakeside Park Garden Center at Lake Merritt, 666 Bellevue Avenue. Hours are Saturday, 10:00 AM – 5:00 PM and Sunday, 10:00 AM – 4:00 PM. Fabulous blossoms and bonsai display. Demonstration both days at 1:30 PM using mature bonsai material. Rick Garcia will be featured on Saturday and Bonsai Master Johnny Uchida on Sunday. Large selection of bonsai trees and other bonsai-related materials available for purchase. For further information, please contact Ron Reid (925) 831-2500.

May 23 / San Francisco, California

Bonsai Society of San Francisco: 50th Anniversary Party & Show at the Hall of Flowers, County Fair Building, Ninth Avenue & Lincoln Way. Hours are 10AM-4PM. The show to feature the club's best bonsai in numerous tokonoma, bonsai demonstrations, a bonsai clinic, and a giant club sales area, all open to the public. At 6PM, Saturday, May 22, there will be an invitation-only buffet dinner and demonstration by Kathy Shaner. For more information visit our website (www.bssf.org) or contact John Edwards, 415-621-0935 or Debra Bleemer, 415-797-2480.

June

June 12-13 / La Canada, California

Descanso Bonsai Society: 40th Annual Bonsai Exhibition at Descanso Gardens, 1418 Descanso Drive. Hours are 9:00 AM – 5:00 PM, daily. Demonstrations 11:00 AM and 1:00 PM each day. Sales area is open to the public. Admission to the exhibition is free with admission to Descanso Gardens. A Saturday night reception 6:30 PM – 9:00 PM includes light refreshments, auction and raffle. For directions go to www.descanso-bonsai.com or for more information contact Michael Jonas at (818) 775-0813.

October

October 2 – 3 / Thousand Oaks, California

Conejo Valley Bonsai Society: 7th Annual Bonsai Exhibition at Gardens of the World, 2001 East Thousand Oaks Boulevard, Thousand Oaks. Exhibition in the Resource Center 9:00 AM – 4:00 PM both Saturday and Sunday and demonstrations in the bandstand at 11:00 AM and 2:00 PM both days; there are no sales at this event. For more information call President Ken Fuentes (805) 495-7480.

October 28-31 / Santa Clara, California

Golden State Bonsai Federation Convention XXXIII: "New Face of Bonsai." The "New Faces" will shape the Art of Bonsai for years to come with the guidance and vision of these new teachers, and the GSBF 2010 will be the able to receive the new visions of bonsai and participate in the future of Bonsai. The July/Aug issue of Golden Statements will contain convention registration information. For more information visit www.gsbfconvention.com.