



*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

# Lights, Actions, Changes!

By Marj Branson

The Conejo Valley Bonsai Society is always looking for new ideas to invigorate members' bonsai practices. Our June 2019 meeting will be no exception: the niche display will be something different than the usual arrangement by one member.

Our fellow member Sheila Galinsky, before moving to Costa Rica, gave the club her trees. One tree is a work in progress with great potential and will be in our annual Holiday Raffle & Auction in December. We will bring it to our June meeting and look forward to the club members' comments.

Our May meeting featured well known bonsai master Mel Ikeda making his first time visit to our club. It was a fun demonstration of his technique for building a tree-on-rock planting. (See pages 4 – 6 for the details.)

### Demonstration Lighting Fixed

One additional note from the May meeting: I think we have resolved our issue with the poor lighting. Member Larry Garfinkel provided a swiveling table lamp for Mel Ikeda's demonstration, and both Mel and our members agreed it was a big help.

Looking ahead, we are in for some hot weather, so keep an eye on your watering program. Not too much nor too little. And don't forget those nasty spider mites, which like to come out in hot weather. If you find the color of your junipers is graying, beware: that is one of the signs of spider mite infestations.

Please remember: the Descanso Bonsai Society has its annual bonsai exhibition this weekend. (See page 9 for details.) In addition to the judged show, there will be demonstrations and a member sale. There are always good deals on bonsai material and related items.

This is the last of the local spring shows—and one of the highest quality exhibitions—so it's worthwhile to attend.

Following the Descanso show, we start with the autumn/winter shows. CVBS is one of the first: our 16th Annu-



Marj Branson

al Exhibition at the Gardens of the World in Thousand Oaks will be on the first weekend of October, the 5th and 6th. Start selecting and grooming your trees now.

### Committee Chair Changes

I'm sorry to report that Larry Kimmel has resigned from his position as chair of the membership and mentoring committee. We will be looking for a replacement as well as the previously announced vacancy for a Field Trips and Activities chair. Please let me know if you can help in either of these positions. Your help and assistance are very important to keep up the running of your club—your support is appreciated!

We thank Larry for his years of service and innovative contributions, including the creation of our Mentoring Program.

Our June meeting will be a workshop. If you have an Ann Lofquist tree and want help keeping its form or style, Ann will be on hand to help you do just that. So, bring in your "Ann" tree for help.

See you Thursday, June 20th. 🌳

## Contact Us

(Click on Email Address)

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# CVBS Programs 2019

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

<del>January 17</del>	7:30 PM: Brief Meeting with <b>Club Elections</b> followed by <b>DEMONSTRATION: Roy Nagatoshi</b> / Tree Critiques <b>BRING YOUR TREES</b>
<del>February 21</del>	7:30 PM: Brief Meeting followed by Workshop— <b>BRING YOUR TREES</b>
<del>March 21</del>	7:30 PM: Brief Meeting followed by <b>DEMONSTRATION: Frank Yee</b> / Cork Jade & Forest Planting
<del>April 18</del>	7:30 PM: Brief Meeting followed by <b>DEMONSTRATION: Jim Barrett</b> / Group Planting <b>JIM BARRETT DEMO CANCELED DUE TO ILLNESS</b>
<del>May 16</del>	7:30 PM: Brief Meeting followed by <b>DEMONSTRATION: Mel Ikeda</b> / Rock Planting
June 20	7:30 PM: Brief Meeting followed by Workshop— <b>BRING YOUR TREES</b>
July 18	7:30 PM: Brief Meeting followed by <b>DEMONSTRATION: Jason Chan</b> / TBA
August 15	7:30 PM: Brief Meeting followed by Workshop and <b>Swap Meet—BRING YOUR TREES</b>
September 19	7:30 PM: Brief Meeting followed by <b>PEER CRITIQUES—BRING YOUR SHOW TREES</b>
October 5 – 6	<b>16TH ANNUAL CVBS EXHIBITION</b> Gardens of the World
October 17	7:30PM : Brief Meeting followed by <b>DEMONSTRATION: Kathy Benson</b> / TBA
November 21	7:30 PM: Brief Meeting with <b>Club Elections</b> followed by Workshop— <b>BRING YOUR TREES</b>
December 19	7:30 PM <b>HOLIDAY POTLUCK, RAFFLE &amp; AUCTION</b>

# Early Summer Care for Bonsai

By Jim Barrett

If you have been pruning your deciduous trees properly, you should be seeing more and finer twigs, which, in turn, make for a more mature-looking tree and a great winter silhouette.

Continue to prune fast-growing elm, zelkova, and maple twigs, leaving one or two nodes on each new branch. Usually the distance between nodes is regulated by the amount of nitrogen the plant is able to use. The more available nitrogen, the longer the internodes—this assumes that the plant is healthy and vigorous.

Because not all bonsai grow at the same rate, you must pay attention to the habits of each one. If you have crab apple, ume, or quince, prune all new growth to one or two nodes around the first week in July. Then do not prune again until next fall. Flower buds form during summer and early fall and pruning during this period reduces the number of flowers you may get next spring.

Along with this procedure, feed high-phosphorus and low-nitrogen fertilizers. Satsuki azaleas should not be fed until after blooming. Once the peak blooming period is over, pluck, or better yet, cut all of the flowers off, making sure to remove any seed pods.

If you have black pine bonsai, try to finish your favorite candle pruning procedure by mid-July or earlier. How you needle prune black pine will depend on the health, the age, and your goals for each tree.

Check with your instructor or bring your untrimmed black pine to your club's next meeting for advice.

Aphids are really out in force now. Watch for them especially on apple, quince, and ume. Spray with an appropriate insecticide. You may want to in-



Jim Barrett

roduce ladybugs purchased at your local nursery. (Let me know how you keep them in your yard.)

Warm days are ahead of us, so pay attention to your watering program and hold back on the high-nitrogen fertilizers.

You should be able to repot ficus, pomegranate, and atlas cedar anytime 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. Add soil as needed and return the tree to its place. Save any major root pruning for next January or February. 🌳

**Warm days are ahead of us, so pay attention to your watering program and hold back on the high-nitrogen fertilizers**

## Refreshments

### Plant Exercise?

June is the month we take time to remember the Greatest Generation. Our fathers, uncles, brothers, cousins and grandfathers and the sacrifices they made on the shores of France 75 years ago—as well as in all the other theaters of World War II.

June also sets aside a day to honor our flag—the 14th.

The longest day of the year occurs in the month of June. Two of my favorite things are celebrated in the sixth month of the year: Donuts and Peanut Butter cookies (two of the lesser known food groups)!

June is also the month for gardening. There is a national day for weeding your garden and a day to exercise with your plants. Sounds like a California thing.

Our meeting will be the 20th of this month—one day before the Summer Solstice. I hope to see you all there.

Refreshments are being supplied by Larry Garfinkel (cold drinks) and sweets will be either Marj or myself. The rest of the year has been covered. We'll publish the list in the July newsletter just in case you have forgotten when you volunteered. Many thanks.

—Denise Snavelly

2019 Refreshments		
	Cold Drinks	Eats / Sweets
June	Larry Garfinkel	Marj or Denise
July	Dick Winston	Mary Welz
Aug.	Ken Fuentes	Ken Martin
Sep.	Ben Conway	Mike Blumenberg

## CVBS Membership

### Interested in CVBS?

CVBS welcomes new members Linda Benyoung of Newberry Park as well as Jim and Tingting Shaw of Camarillo. Happy to have you all with us!

Our club is open to anyone interested in the horticultural art of bonsai. If you are not a member, consider joining now. We meet 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: CVBS Membership, c/o Marj Branson, 1169 Triunfo Canyon Road, Westlake Village, CA 91361.

# Ikeda Demonstrates Tree-on-Rock Planting

By David Whiteside

Back in the 1960s, Mel Ikeda was a hairdresser. But his father owned one of the first bonsai nurseries in Orange County. While still in high school, the young Mel met the late bonsai master John Yoshio Naka, who taught at his dad's nursery. Before long, Mel was collecting California junipers for bonsai. Today that historic bonsai nursery is a parking lot and Mel is a bonsai master in his own right.

At the May 16, 2019 meeting of the Conejo Valley Bonsai Society, bonsai master Mel Ikeda demonstrated his unique approach to creating tree-on-rock plantings.

During the days prior to the demonstration, Mel cemented together two volcanic-looking rocks from Utah. The joined rocks were mounted on a flat base made of cement mixed with perlite and coarse sand over a wire mesh. "It takes several days to do," Mel said, adding: "Two days ago, it was taller, but part broke off. You never know how it's going to come out."

For this demonstration, Mel brought two dwarf Japanese garden junipers (*Juniperus procumbens* 'Nana'), a species that, he explained, his father pioneered as retail bonsai material. At the beginning of the demonstration, Mel settled on the larger of the two junipers for this planting.

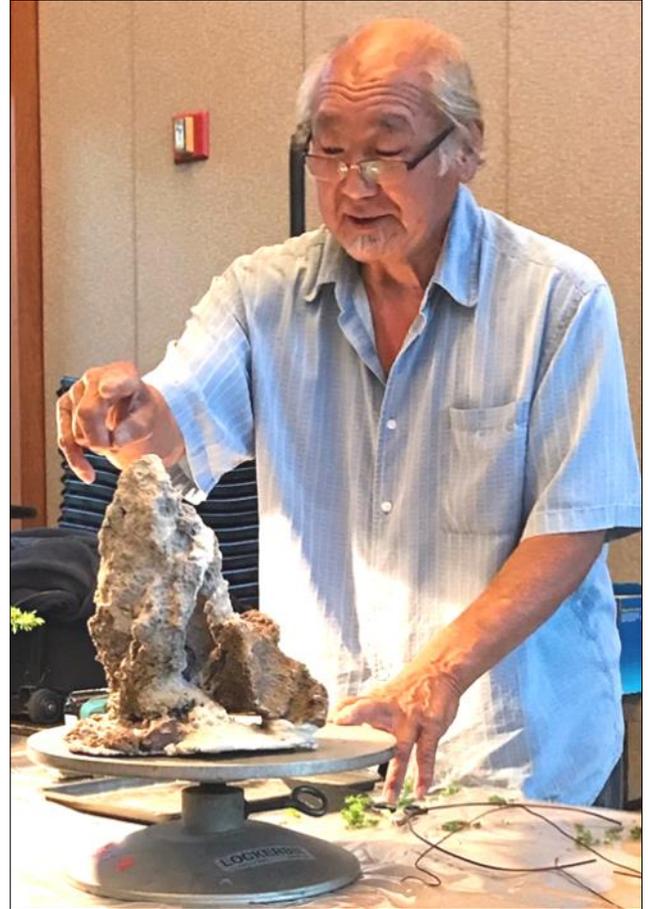
Mel cut out the center of the root ball and worked the remaining

*(Continued on page 5)*

**Mel Ikeda shows that the rock formation once was taller (right).**

**Preparing the root ball on the juniper he has selected for his planting (below left).**

**Once the roots were prepared, Mel threaded them through holes in the rock (below right).**



Photos by Larry Kimmelman



**Ikeda** (Continued from page 4)

roots free of soil with a hook and chopsticks. He was careful to retain as many long roots as possible. Once the roots were prepared, he sprayed them, the rocks, and the soil with Miracle Gro® plant fertilizer. (In an aside, Mel recommended spraying moss with this before a show. “It will green right up,” he said.)

The soil he used was a mixture of perlite and akadama, a naturally occurring, granular clay-like mineral popular as a bonsai soil component, especially in Japan. Mel put some of this soil mixture combined with soil from the tree’s nursery can around the base of the rocks.

About two-thirds of the way up the rock structure, there was a hollow space with holes in the bottom. Once the tree’s roots were essentially free of soil, Mel placed the tree in this pocket and threaded the roots through those two large holes and down the sides of the rocks. He put aluminum wire through the root ball and around the rock to anchor the tree in place.

Next, Mel turned his attention to the tree’s foliage. An important consideration was what kind of apex the composition should have: the pinnacle of rock or the apex of the tree. He decided that because the rock was the elder, he would show respect for it by having a rock apex.

He also said there was too much foliage. “In a good bonsai, you can see the trunk,” he said. “So we’re going to remove all this small stuff so you can see the trunk.”

Rather than completely remove all the branches at the trunk, Mel left stumps that he jinned for added visual interest.

Once he had finished trimming the foliage, Mel added the akadama-perlite-nursery can soil mix and worked it into the pocket around the trunk. He worked it into the roots both from above and below.

The final step in this demonstration was to cover all the roots and soil with muck. Mel said he used to use what gophers pushed up as the base for his muck. He’s not as happy with the muck mix he currently can get. To hold all the muck, roots, and soil in place, Mel wired plastic mesh over it all. An alternative would be to wrap it all in a cloth such as burlap to keep it in place and help retain moisture. Whatever you use, Mel said it should be left in place for about a year until the roots are established enough to remove the anchor wire.

*(Continued on page 6)*

**With the juniper anchored in place on the rock, Mel trimmed more foliage (below left). If you look closely, you can see the small jins he left on the lower portion of the trunk. Note the nice movement in the trunk, a feature that Mel said he wanted to reveal by reducing the foliage.**

**Next, Mel worked his soil mixture of akadama, perlite, and nursery-can soil into the root ball in its cavity in the rock (below right). He used the ubiquitous bonsai tool—a chopstick—to eliminate air pockets and to tamp down the soil. Note the long roots coming out the back of the rock on the right.**





Applying muck to cover roots and soil (above left).

Note the plastic mesh wired around the back of the composition to hold the muck, roots, and soil in place (above right).

At the end of Mel Ikeda's demonstration, the tree-on-rock composition remains a work in progress (right). Once the tree has recovered, the long branches need to be pruned back substantially to establish the proper scale between tree and rock.

*Ikeda (Continued from page 5)*

This composition needs to recover from all the stress of the work on its roots and foliage. Later, it will need to be finetuned. There is one long branch that remains too straight and hides the trunk's pleasing movement. Also, the foliage needs to be trimmed back much more so it is in scale and looks like an ancient tree high up on a mountainous rock. "But," Mel said, "that's enough for now."

The composition was placed on a shallow metal tray, which will retain moisture. Mel said that whoever took the planting home after the meeting should soak it immediately. CVBS thanks Mel Ikeda for a fascinating demonstration and this tree-on-rock planting, which will be part of the club's annual Holiday Potluck, Raffle & Auction at our December 19 meeting. 🌲



## 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 2019 calendar and let us know when you would like to present your display.

—Marj Branson

2019 Niche Displays	
June	Club Tree
July	Ken Martin
August	Mike Blumenberg
Sept.	Ben Conway

## 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

*Bonsai Today*, Number 49, 3rd Issue of 1997, May – June.

The next Book of the Month is the 49th edition of *Bonsai Today*, a periodical published in May – June of 1997. This periodical is no longer published, but many bonsai enthusiasts keep old editions because each is packed with articles describing techniques to create and care for bonsai. Each article typically includes detailed illustrations and photographs complementing the text and making it easier to understand whatever task is being described. There is also a gallery of beautiful show-quality bonsai trees. The CVBS library recently received a donation of several past editions of *Bonsai Today*, so I randomly selected one to review. The 49th edition includes an article describing the process to reshape a mature juniper bonsai, another provides a step-by-step guide for rescuing a neglected tree, and yet another provides "Tips for Improving your Bonsai." Each issue is unique, so check one out at a future club meeting!

Note that the successor to *Bonsai Today* is *Bonsai Focus*, *The International Bonsai Magazine*, which is published from offices in Europe but also covers North America and comes in several languages, including English. Some back issues of *Bonsai Today* are available from [StoneLantern.com](http://StoneLantern.com), which is owned by the former publisher of *Bonsai Today*.

—Mike Blumenberg

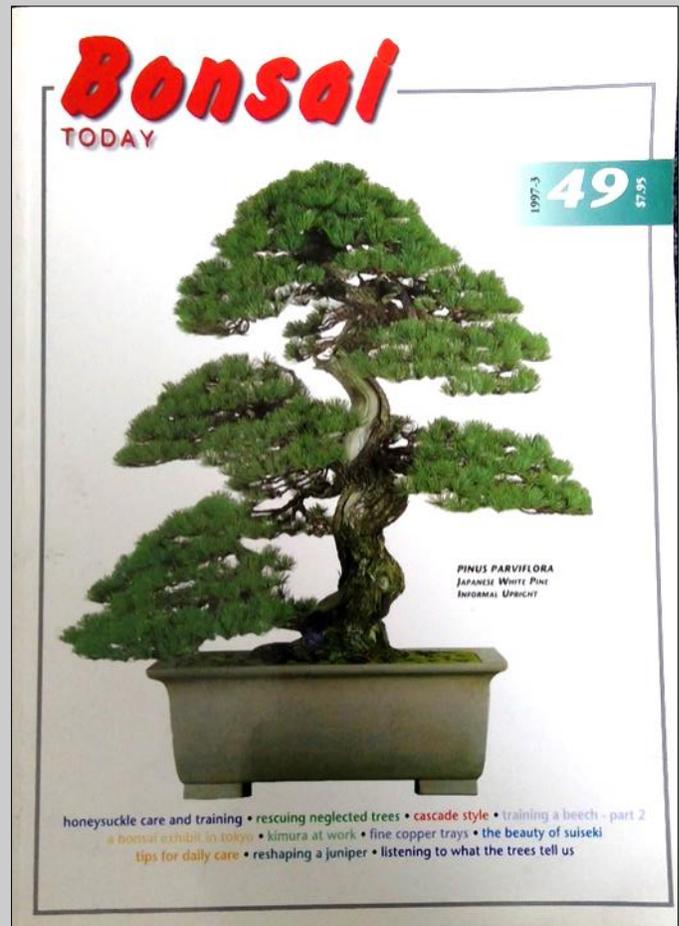


Photo by Mike Blumenberg

# Two-for-One Composition Display

Editor's Note: Rick Naber provided the May 2019 niche display of two trees and an accent plant. Here is what Rick said about his composition.

The single, taller tree is a boxwood that I got in a nursery can seven or eight years ago. There was a bit of a dimple in the trunk. With a router bit in a die grinder, I enlarged that feature. Because the wood is naturally hard, I didn't use any hardener or preservative on it, but I did use some ink to darken the interior of the hollow trunk. The Chinese elms in the seven-tree forest on rocks are about nine years old; I grew them from clippings. Most of my tree-and-rock bonsai are on a single rock, but this one uses eight or nine rocks with the trees placed between them. I brought this to honor the theme of tonight's demonstration: a rock planting.

—Rick Naber

Photos by Larry Kimmelman



**2019**

**June**



**June 15 – 16 2019 La Cañada-Flintridge, California**

Descanso Bonsai Society Annual Show, Van de Kamp Hall, Descanso Gardens, 1418 Descanso Drive, 9 AM-5PM, Demonstrations at 10 AM & 1 PM both days, Reception Saturday at 6 PM. For more information, contact Cesáreo Pérez at [cesareop2001@gmail.com](mailto:cesareop2001@gmail.com).

**June 29 – 30, 2019 Oakland, California**

San Francisco Suiseki Kai, California Suiseki Society, Bay Area Shohin Society, and California Shohin Society: Inaugural Bay Area Suiseki and Shohin Show at the Lakeside Park Garden Center, 666 Bellevue Ave. Show hours are 11 AM to 5 PM Saturday and 11 AM to 4 PM Sunday. Suiseki Presentation on Sunday at 1 PM. Large vendor area. Members of all Bay Area Bonsai and Suiseki Clubs are invited to exhibit. Clubs can purchase vendor tables for club sales. If you would like to exhibit or be a vendor, please contact Lisa Harper at [lisaharper@me.com](mailto:lisaharper@me.com), or call (510) 220-3339.

**July**

**July 10, 2019 Oakland, California**

East Bay Bonsai Society (EBBS): Annual Auction will be held at Lakeside Garden Center, located at 666 Bellevue Ave. Auction starts 7:30pm (preview opens at 7:00pm) to get your hands on bonsai trees, pots, tools, and accessories.

**August**

**August 24 – 25, 2019 Santa Rosa, California**

Redwood Empire Bonsai Society (REBS): 36<sup>th</sup> Annual Bonsai Show, at the Santa Rosa Veterans Building, 1351 Maple Ave. Featuring Bonsai Master Kathy Shaner. Bonsai demonstrations both days, 1 – 3 PM. Demonstration tree to be raffled. Large bonsai vendor and plant sales. Exciting silent auctions. Free admission and parking. Relax with the Bonsai Cafe. Contact Bob Shimon at (707) 884-4126 or [shimon@mcn.org](mailto:shimon@mcn.org). Visit our website [www.rebsbonsai.org](http://www.rebsbonsai.org).

**September**

**September 21, 2019 San Andreas, California**

Mother Lode Bonsai Club: Fifth Annual Bonsai Exhibition at the San Andreas Public Library, 1299 Gold Hunter Road (off Mt. Ranch Rd.), San Andreas. Show hours are 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Demonstrations at 11 a.m. and 1:30 p.m. with prize drawings immediately following. Vendor and member bonsai-related items will be available for sale. Open to the public with free admission and free 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).

**October**



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**October 5 – 6, 2019 Thousand Oaks, California**

Conejo Valley Bonsai Society: 16<sup>th</sup> Annual Bonsai Exhibition at the Resource Center at the Gardens of the World, 2001 Thousand Oak Blvd. Show hours are 9 AM – 4 PM with demonstrations in the Bandstand at 1 PM both days. Free Admission. No sales of bonsai or related items. For information, call Marj Branson at (805) 373-1330 or visit our website at [www.cvbs-bonsai.org](http://www.cvbs-bonsai.org).