



conejo valley

BONSAI society

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A member of the Golden State Bonsai Federation

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President's Message

Programs and Awards

By Marj Branson

Summer is in full swing, and the Conejo Valley Bonsai Society's program schedule is, too.

First, in July our speaker will be Jason Chan. In a program aimed at beginners and experienced bonsai hobbyists alike, Jason will demonstrate wiring techniques. So, whether you're just learning the basics, developing advanced techniques, or just need a refresher course, this program is for every-

one.

In August, which is a workshop meeting, we will hold our annual members' swap meet. So, check out your bonsai benches and see what you would like to swap with a fellow member. Pots, tools, and other bonsai related items are fair game, too.

And in September, we'll be preparing for our annual fall exhibition, so the meeting will be dedicated to peer critiques of show trees. Start reviewing your collections now and preparing trees you'd like to exhibit so you have at least one tree ready for your fellow members to help finetune.

Hopefully, you visited the Descanso Bonsai Society's Annual Show June 15 – 16, 2019. Several of our members who are also Descanso members exhibited trees and won awards.

In the advanced category, Rick Naber showed one of his boxwood forests. It won a second-place ribbon.

Meanwhile, CVBS member Mel Carrillo took the novice category by storm. He won two first place ribbons: one for his Kingsville boxwood and another for his rosemary. Mel also took two second place awards for his shohin (small) Chojubai quince in a miniature tokonoma display and his procumbens nana juniper. The juniper also garnered Mel the prestigious Dick Wydman Award. All told, Mel garnered the Most Points Novice award.



Marj Branson



Rick Naber's boxwood forest (above) took 2nd place in the advanced division of the Descanso Bonsai Society's annual show.

In the novice division, Mel Carrillo's shohin Chojubai quince in a tokonoma display (below) won a 2nd place ribbon.



Photos by Marj Branson and Mel Carrillo

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Conejo Valley Bonsai Society Meetings

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

Visit Our Website
www.cvbs-bonsai.org

Follow Us on Facebook
www.facebook.com/conejovalleybonsaisociety

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.

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

If Summer Heat Hits, Look Out

By Jim Barrett

This month we can expect a slowing down of both roots and top growth.

Deciduous trees, especially Japanese maples, may need protection from direct sun and drying winds. Home Depot sells shade cloth in varying strengths, if you feel ambitious and want to build a shade frame over your more tender trees.

Make sure your watering program is not neglected. It may be that you will have to water more than once a day. Shohin [small] bonsai will need an extra amount of care in terms of water, shade, and maintaining a cool, humid atmosphere. ["Shohin" refers to trees that are 6 inches – 8 inches from base to apex. The smallest bonsai classification is called "mame," (which translates as "bean"). Mame measure 3 inches – 6 inches. — Editor]

It is becoming more and more common to see shohin collections imbedded in a tray of damp sand. This not only provides humidity and moisture, but also keeps the pot cool.

If your trees are placed against a wall or fence, be sure to rotate them every week or so. This evens out the tree's form by exposing all sides to the elements. Trees left against a fence or wall tend to develop flat areas, stunted branches, and even dead branches on the wall side.

Except for emergency potting, wait until early fall for this chore.

Crabapples and ume [*Prunus mume*, commonly called Chinese plum or Japanese apricot] should be left to grow wild until late September—the same with wisteria. Try stripping the first three to four sets (closest to the trunk), leaving only a few leaves at branch terminals. Try this on crabapple and ume. Do this



Jim Barrett

also on the compound leaves on wisteria, but just strip the first few sets of leaflets on each leaf. This procedure should cause the tree to set more buds for next year's flowers.

Fertilizers high in phosphorous and potash, low in nitrogen, should be used this summer. Do not over fertilize. In fact, if you are using liquid or chemical fertilizers, cut the recommended dose in half. Over fertilizing during this semi-dormant period could cause root rot and other undesirable conditions.

If you are planning to add new plants to your collection or are just starting out, now is a good time to look for potentially good bonsai stock—especially deciduous material. You will find many bargains at the [Conejo Valley Bonsai Society's annual August Swap Meet]. 🌱

Make sure your watering program is not neglected.

Refreshments

Happy July 4th!

July is a month full of holidays. We're celebrating everything from chicken wings to sugar cookies, barbershop quartets, cowboys, and country music. July also honors vanished fliers, the Canadians, and the French—both their revolution and their fries.

All these holidays pale in the presence of the 4th of July. The day Americans celebrate the signing of the Declaration of Independence, authored by Thomas Jefferson and ratified by the Continental Congress. It declared our freedom from British rule.

The Declaration speaks to everyone who strives for Liberty.

Enjoy your picnics and the fireworks and remember why we celebrate.

At the July meeting, refreshments are being supplied by Dick Winston (cold drinks) and sweets by Mary Welz. The rest of the year has been covered (see below).

Thank you all for volunteering. Let me know if there are any changes either at a meeting, by calling (562) 964-9284, or emailing me at refreshments@cvbs-bonsai.org.

See you at the July 18th meeting.

—Denise Snavelly

2019 Refreshments		
	Cold Drinks	Eats / Sweets
July	Dick Winston	Mary Welz
Aug.	Ken Fuentes	Ken Martin
Sep.	Ben Conway	Mike Blumenberg
Oct.	David Williams	Mel Carrillo

CVBS Membership

Interested in CVBS?

CVBS welcomes new members John Kitchens of Somis and Rick Boyer of Ventura. Happy to have you 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.

Glorious Azaleas Galore at Lake Merritt

By Mike Blumenberg

I missed the Conejo Valley Bonsai Society's May 16, 2019 meeting because I was travelling north to attend a family wedding. I regretted missing Mel Ikeda's demonstration, but my travels provided the opportunity to visit family and friends. And there was a bonsai bonus: It also gave me the opportunity to attend the annual Bay Area Satsuki Aikokai (BASA) exhibition of Satsuki azalea bonsai.

BASA is a group of bonsai enthusiasts who are passionate about Japanese Satsuki azalea bonsai. It presents a two-day exhibition in May of each year, featuring dozens of Japanese Satsuki azalea bonsai in bloom.

The exhibition also included demonstrations on creating Satsuki azalea bonsai by noted bonsai artists as well as sales of azaleas, pots, tools, books, and accessories. The show was held at Lake Merritt in Oakland, adjacent to the Bonsai Garden.



Satsuki azalea (*Rhododendron indicum*) is a variety of azalea native to the mountains of Japan, where they have been cultivated for their diverse and dazzling flowers for several hundred

years. Thousands of varieties display a wide array of blossoms, often exhibiting multiple colors in a single plant. These azaleas are prized for their colorful display in gardens and as formal bonsai. Satsuki make exceptional bonsai material as they are usually fast growing and adapt well to the pruning and wiring required to develop successful bonsai.

Satsuki azaleas can be imported from Japan where some of the largest trees and widest variety of colors are grown. Most varieties reach their blooming peak during the month of May, when annual shows celebrating these beautiful trees occur throughout the San Francisco Bay Area.

(Continued on page 5)



An accent plant (upper left).

A Hanabin azalea (above). Note the daisy-like blossoms.

Two distinctive azaleas from the BASA show (left and below).



Azaleas (Continued from page 4)

While touring the show, BASA members were excited to show me their trees. More than one member pointed out an exceptional new variety called Hanabin with flowers that looked more like a daisy than an azalea. This tree had “recently” been imported from Japan, a process that involves a three-year quarantine in the U.S.

During the quarantine, buds were removed to prevent it from flowering and forcing the plant’s energy into growth. The result is the spectacular tree shown in the picture on page 4, blooming for the first time in three years. I’ve also shared pictures of several other beautiful Satsuki azalea bonsai and accent plants displayed at the show.

Maybe CVBS should do a road trip next May to attend BASA 2020. 🌲



Two accent plants from the BASA exhibition (upper left).

Note both the variety in colors and shapes of the blossoms as well as the many different trunk and branch styles in the azaleas on this page, all from the BASA show.

One outstanding azalea bonsai (bottom left) and a closeup of its base and trunk (bottom right).



Photos by Mike Blumenberg



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	
July	Ken Martin
August	Mike Blumenberg
Sept.	Ben Conway
Oct.	David Whiteside

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.

—Mike Blumenberg

Book of the Month

Post-Dated: The Schooling of an Irreverent Bonsai Monk, Michael Hagedorn, Crataegus Books, Portland, OR. © 2008. 215 pages. \$14.95.

This issue's Book of the Month, *Post-Dated: The Schooling of an Irreverent Bonsai Monk*, by Michael Hagedorn, is based on the author's two-and-a-half-year bonsai apprenticeship with Shinji Suzuki in Obuse, Japan. This is not, the author cautions in his preface, a how-to book: you will not learn any bonsai techniques in its 200-plus pages. But the attentive reader will learn a great deal about bonsai culture, not only as it exists in Japan but also as it applies to the global bonsai community. "It is not Japanese culture that we bring home," Hagedorn writes, "it is bonsai culture."

Post-Dated consists of two parts, each distinctive in its content, tone, and texture. In Part I, Hagedorn details many of his experiences as a bonsai apprentice. This section of the book consists of material from the journal the author kept while in Japan—some direct quotes, some paraphrases. It reveals the hard work under sometimes harsh conditions as well as the joy of learning in the traditional way of bonsai apprenticeships: "We opened no books." Instead, apprentices learn by observation and practice.

In Part II, Hagedorn waxes more philosophical. He explores some of the cultural underpinnings of bonsai, as practiced in Japan. Hagedorn draws on diverse sources of Zen Buddhism and Taoism as well as Japanese aesthetics to reveal the core of the horticultural art of bonsai. For example, "bonsai is a statement of aesthetic conservatism ... an art of reticence. We carefully enhance a tree, rather than risk obliterating something special with too much technique," he says. And elsewhere, "Zen is confusing ... Rather than a dilution through the mental medium, a solid physical medium is preferred ... If you want to talk about a tree, use a tree." Noting that bonsai artists draw on the naturally asymmetrical appearance of ancient trees, he points out that "the art of bonsai is expressed in the balancing of asymmetry, how we position the branches and foliage to act as counterweights to the often impossibly contorted and irregular trunk." Moreover, bonsai is not individualistic but rather communal: "A single person cannot invest a bonsai with meaning. It is a gift to the next person, and therein lies its heart. Bonsai derive their strength and voice from a community, not an individual." Contrasted to other horticultural arts such as raising and displaying orchids, which "we keep ... because this is how we wish the world to be; we keep bonsai because they are like our grandparents, grounded and prophetic: the future behind us." In the end, Hagedorn says in his closing words, "All art is a proxy for something else. And I feel that a bonsai, if not overtly figural, is at least proxy for our hopes of the future, as a post-dated love letter."

—David Whiteside

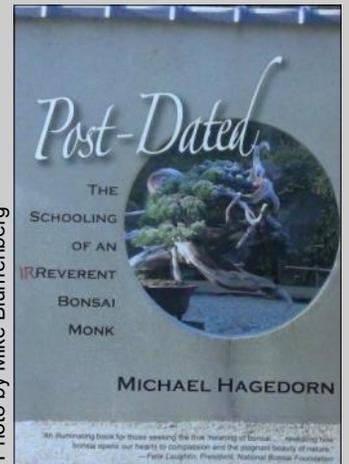


Photo by Mike Blumenberg

A CVBS Club Bonsai

Editor's Note: The June 2019 niche tree was donated to the club by former CVBS member Sheila Galinsky and presented by Ken Fuentes and Marj Branson. Here is the tree's story.

The June 2019 niche display was unusual in several ways. First, it was a work-in-progress and therefore presented informally: no display stand or companion plant. Second, it was not presented by its owner, who could speak about the tree's full history. Instead, club Advisor Ken Fuentes presented the tree along with additional commentary by President Marj Branson. Ken explained that he believes the tree is a San Jose juniper (*Juniperus chinensis* 'San Jose'). It was a tree that Sheila had in the back of her bonsai collection and had not been maintained for quite some time. "It was out of control when we got it," Ken said. Nonetheless, he added, "if it weren't so long and leggy it could be really nice." Marj explained that it is one of several trees Ken picked up from Sheila before she moved to Costa Rica. Ken took it home and has done a lot of work on it, removing excess foliage to reveal the tree's trunk and branch structure. Hopefully, it will bud back so that over time it can become more compact, which will enhance its apparent age. The bonsai now resides in Marj's yard, where it will remain until this year's Holiday Raffle & Auction at our annual potluck on December 19.

—David Whiteside

Photo by David Whiteside



2019

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 7:30 PM (preview opens at 7:00 PM) to get your hands on bonsai trees, pots, tools, and accessories.

August

August 24 – 25, 2019 Santa Rosa, California

Redwood Empire Bonsai Society (REBS): 36th 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. Visit our website 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 AM to 4 PM. Demonstrations at 11 AM and 1:30 PM 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. Visit club website at www.motherlodebonsai.org.

October



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October 5 – 6, 2019 Thousand Oaks, California

Conejo Valley Bonsai Society: 16th 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.

October 24 – 27, 2019 Riverside, California

Golden State Bonsai Federation: 42nd Annual Convention: Bonsai Forever, Riverside Convention Center. Hotel: Marriott Riverside at the Convention Center, 3400 Market Street, Riverside, CA 92501. Visit the GSBF website at www.gsbfbonsai.org for the full schedule of seminars, demonstrations, tours, workshops, and events.

President's Message (Continued from page 1)

What a weekend that was. Congratulations to both Rick and Mel!

We continue to grow as two new members joined at our June meeting (see CVBS Membership, page 3, for details). With this recent spate of new members, is it time to organize a bonsai nursery trip? Let me know if the group would like to organize an outing!

And remember to plan your own trip to the Golden State Bonsai Federation Convention coming up in Riverside October 24 – 27, 2019. Sign up between July 1st and August 15th to get the early bird rate. For details, go to the GSBF website (<http://www.gsbfbonsai.org/>). Several CVBS members report that they already have signed up for workshops, which are filling up.

The warm weather is on us so don't forget to check your watering program and rotate your trees. With the warm weather, no repotting can be done but tree styling and maintenance can be. 🌳

Mel Carrillo's procumbens nana juniper (right) with its 2nd place ribbon (red), Dick Wydman Award ribbon (purple), and his Most Points Novice ribbon (blue and white.)

