



*conejo valley*

**BONSAI** society

Volume 16 Number 8 August 2019

A member of the Golden State Bonsai Federation

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### **President's Message**

## **Exhibition and Election**

By Marj Branson

It may be hard to believe, but it's already time to plan and prepare for our 16th Annual Bonsai Exhibition and Demonstrations on October 5th and 6th at Gardens of the World in Thousand Oaks.

To help members focus on the exhibition and refine their show trees, our September meeting will be a member peer critique. Please plan to bring trees that you expect to exhibit to this meeting so your fellow club members can offer any help or advice you want.

The September meeting will be our final meeting preparing for our exhibition. So, please also check your calendars and think about when you can help: Friday setup, Saturday or Sunday exhibition hours, and/or Sunday afternoon teardown. Exhibition trees must be delivered Friday afternoon and picked up Sunday afternoon.

Meanwhile, our August meeting will be a workshop and our annual Swap Meet. If you have any trees, accessories, pots, or other bonsai related items you would like to part with, bring them to our August meeting. Don't forget you can also get items from your fellow members so have another look at your bonsai collection and give this some thought.

In addition to the Swap Meet, our August meeting will reintroduce our short 5-minute talks before workshop



**Marj Branson**

meetings on specific bonsai topics. Ken Martin will be starting it off at our August meeting with a talk about fertilizers.

We have one more demonstration scheduled for this year: Kathy Benson in October. We have yet to finalize the topic and are open to suggestions.

Program Chair Nancy Smeets has put together an excellent schedule of demonstrators for 2019 and is starting on

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### **The Conejo Valley Bonsai Society's 15th Annual Exhibition at Gardens of the World in October 2018 (below).**

Photo by David Williams



### **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

Visit Our Website  
[www.cvbs-bonsai.org](http://www.cvbs-bonsai.org)

Follow Us on Facebook  
[www.facebook.com/conejovalleybonsaisociety](http://www.facebook.com/conejovalleybonsaisociety)

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(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 <b>Club Elections</b> followed by <b>DEMONSTRATION: Roy Nagatoshi</b> / Tree Critiques <b>BRING YOUR TREES</b>
February 21	7:30 PM: Brief Meeting followed by Workshop— <b>BRING YOUR TREES</b>
March 21	7:30 PM: Brief Meeting followed by <b>DEMONSTRATION: Frank Yee</b> / Cork Jade & Forest Planting
April 18	7:30 PM: Brief Meeting followed by <b>DEMONSTRATION: Jim Barrett</b> / Group Planting <b>JIM BARRETT DEMO CANCELED DUE TO ILLNESS</b>
May 16	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> / Wiring Techniques
August 15	7:30 PM: Brief Meeting followed by Fertilizer Talk, Workshop and <b>Swap Meet</b> — <b>BRING YOUR TREES AND OTHER ITEMS</b>
September 19	7:30 PM: Brief Meeting followed by <b>PEER CRITIQUES</b> — <b>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>

# When To Defoliate Maples

By Jim Barrett

Ahh! Good old summer. Between the heat and the not so good water, most maples (at least mine) look pretty tired.

If the maples are healthy, consider leaf pruning them towards the end of this month. Remove every leaf—large, small, healthy, or shriveled. Leaving some or pruning in stages only makes the tree try to survive on what is left. I don't recommend leaf pruning red or lace leaf varieties.

If you candle pruned your black pines in June or July, you should have many new shoots appearing at the base of the cut-off candles. Selectively remove those shoots that are growing vertically off horizontal branches, leaving one or two side shoots and one for the new terminal of each branch. What you want to promote is a fine network of twigs.

On vertical branches in the upper areas and the top of the tree, remove the center candles, leaving one, two, or three side shoots. On more mature trees and more intricate networks of twigs and branches, leave fewer new shoots.

In October or November, you will want to remove some of the new growth you left this summer.

Think about rotating your trees—especially if they are displayed against a wall or fence. Turning them periodically will even out the growth and may prevent dieback.

Some trees are entering a semi-dormant period now and, for this reason, seem to need less water. Don't think that something is wrong unless the tree shows signs of distress. Heat buildup in soil above 80 or 90 degrees tends to slow growth. This is natural. Do not water if



Jim Barrett

the soil is still wet. It takes practice and knowledge of your plants' needs to keep them healthy and happy. Fortunately, most plants survive most mistakes.

If you fertilize this month, do so sparingly. I recommend a very diluted liquid fertilizer low in nitrogen if you must fertilize.

Spraying fungicide to control powdery mildew or needle cast may also kill beneficial fungi present in soils. It's not a bad idea to cover soil surfaces with plastic

or a portable shield to keep drips and spray off of the soil.

Wire that was put on earlier last winter or spring should be checked—especially on deciduous trees. Remove all wire and reapply it only on those branches that do not hold their position and shape.

No repotting except emergency repotting until this fall. 🌱

**If [your] maples are healthy, consider leaf pruning them towards the end of this month.**

## Refreshments

### Farewell Summer

August brings an end to those lazy, hazy days of summer. School starts again for most children and some adults. Summer vacations become a pleasant memory.

For the "two Kens," August is the month they signed up to bring refreshments to our meeting.

Bless their hearts.

Ken F. will bring cold drinks and Ken M. will tempt us with a sweet treat we can all enjoy. Volunteers have already signed up to bring refreshments for the months of September, October, and November. Thank you one and all.

Any problems with your schedules, please let me know by calling (818) 865-1034, or emailing me at refreshments@cvbs-bonsai.org.

Unfortunately, I'll be out of state for our August meeting on the 15th. See you in September.

—Denise Snavely

2019 Refreshments		
	Cold Drinks	Eats / Sweets
Aug.	Ken Fuentes	Ken Martin
Sep.	Ben Conway	Mike Blumenberg
Oct.	David Williams	Mel Carrillo
Nov.	Nancy Smeets	Ken Fuentes

## CVBS Membership

### Interested in CVBS?

CVBS 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.

—Nancy Smeets

# Chan Teaches a Wiring ‘Master’s Class’

By Ken Martin

The July 2019 meeting of the Conejo Valley Bonsai Society amounted to a “master’s class” in bonsai wiring technique presented by Jason Chan, co-owner with his wife, Renee, of Eastern Leaf Inc. The Chino-based company, which started in the fall of 2004 as a small vendor selling lucky bamboo arrangements at local farmer’s markets in San Diego, is now a large bonsai nursery and retailer with both brick-and-mortar and online outlets.

As wiring technique demonstration materials, Jason’s brought two trees, both junipers. The first tree is a prostrata (aka *Juniperus horizontalis*) and the second a procumbens Nana (*Juniperus procumbens* ‘Nana’). He said that the prostrata is particularly suitable for wiring practice; he also recommended San Jose junipers (*Juniperus chinensis* ‘San Jose’).

In preparation for his demonstration, Jason laid out a variety of sizes of aluminum wire. “When wiring,” he said, “it’s important to have every size of wire.”

Of course, it’s also important to select the right size wire for each branch. One third the branch size for aluminum wire works, but the easiest way is to hold a wire with about two inches free and press on the branch. If the wire bends when pushing the branch, the wire size is too small. If the branch moves, the wire will hold the branch where you want it placed.

If you want to put a lot of movement into the branch, Jason said to use a size larger wire. But he cautioned that you should avoid using wire that is thicker than necessary because if the wire is too large for the branch, it will be easier to damage the cambium layer when bending. Jason added that if you think there is a danger of injuring the cambium layer, the wire can be wrapped in damp raffia before application.

Turning to the trees, Jason said he would begin by wiring the first branch of the prostrata. Once that was done, he planned to wire the entire procumbens while the first tree was passed around so all can see the wiring up close.

The first thing he did was to get rid of the “stuff”—downward growing foliage—on the bottom of the first branch. Then he wired the main branch starting near the trunk as the position of the main branch relative to the trunk was satisfactory. He positioned the wire on the branch with thumb and forefinger, holding the branch still while making a 45-degree wire bend with the other hand.

He was teased a bit for keeping the entire wire roll on his right forearm. He said it is important to make sure the wire you are using is long enough. By having the complete roll intact, this problem goes away. Always use long segments of wire so you don’t come up short.

When wiring the secondary branches, the objective is to position them out and then up at the tips. Jason tries to find a pair to wire using a single piece of wire. Secondary branches can be wired together without going around the main branch.

When wiring two branches, he said to put two turns of wire around one to anchor the wire while bending the other end of the wire around the other branch. Then go back and complete wiring the first branch.

Wires on top of one another should be avoided. When in doubt, look at the branch from the underside to see where to place the wire between two branches. There may be some areas where there are three secondary branches that need wire. There you can wire just a single secondary branch.

After finishing the first branch on the prostrata, Jason passed it around. Later in the demonstration, he returned to the prostrata to create a properly proportioned apex. To do this, Jason used a large wire to bend the trunk near the top at an acute angle. That had the

(Continued on page 5)



Jason Chan cleaned downward growing foliage from the first branch of a prostrata juniper (above).

CVBS members observe Chan’s technique as he wraps wire around the prostrata’s branch (below).

Photos by David Williams



**Wiring** (Continued from page 4)

effect of transforming what had been the apex into a side branch, while a former side branch became the new apex. Taking a fresh look at this tree, he said it could be called a modified cascade.

Meanwhile, Jason worked on the procumbens Nana. He said this species grows about a third as fast as the prostrata. He said both of these species will grow and mature much faster if put in the ground. He said this isn't practical, however, when you have about 20,000 trees, as he does. Planting in the ground takes more space and he needs the flexibility to move trees around.

Asked why this demonstration tree had very little taper, Jason said it is not a characteristic of the species. This tree had been allowed to grow unrestrained and all the energy went to the top foliage, resulting in little or no taper.

He wired the branches of this second tree much as the first. This tree can be an informal upright style. With the branch placement, it really doesn't fit any classical style. It is a bit like a yamadori (tree collected from nature) in that you take what the tree gives you.

Following common practice, Jason started styling this tree from the bottom and worked up. When he reached the apex, he said you needn't wire all the branches at the apex and you should leave more foliage there.

**More About Jason**

In 2012, Jason became an apprentice to renowned bonsai artist, David Nguy. In 2014, Jason was elected to the board of the Golden State Bonsai Federation. In 2015, he became the editor of Golden Statements, GSBF's quarterly bonsai magazine, a position he held for two years. Locally, he has served as an officer for Kofu Bonsai Kai, one of Southern California's largest bonsai clubs. He is also a founding member of the Chino Bonsai Club.

Jason does demonstrations for local clubs and has participated as a demonstrator at the Huntington Library, Art Collections, and Botanical Gardens in San Marino. The Huntington houses both its own bonsai collection as well as one of GSBF's three collections.

Jason shares his knowledge through his blog articles and videos (see Book of the Month, page 6). He also contributes regularly to various bonsai publications including Bonsai Club In-

ternational and GSBF's Golden Statements, which recently was transformed into an electronic, online only publication. In 2017, he helped establish David Nguy's bonsai school, Bonsai Jidai, where Jason is an instructor.

At the end of the demonstration, Jason generously donated both trees to the club for our holiday auction. We thank him for providing easy-to-understand instructions on the very important subject of wiring a bonsai. 🌳



**Chan carefully explained each step in wiring a bonsai (above). He said that when it's done, it looks complex, but each step is simple.**

**Showing exactly what he has done, Jason Chan carried the prostrata around so CVBS members could get an up-close view of how properly applied wire looks (below). That's Renee standing by the doors at rear, left.**



# 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	
August	Mike Blumenberg
Sept.	Ben Conway
Oct.	David Whiteside
Nov.	Ken Fuentes

## 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).

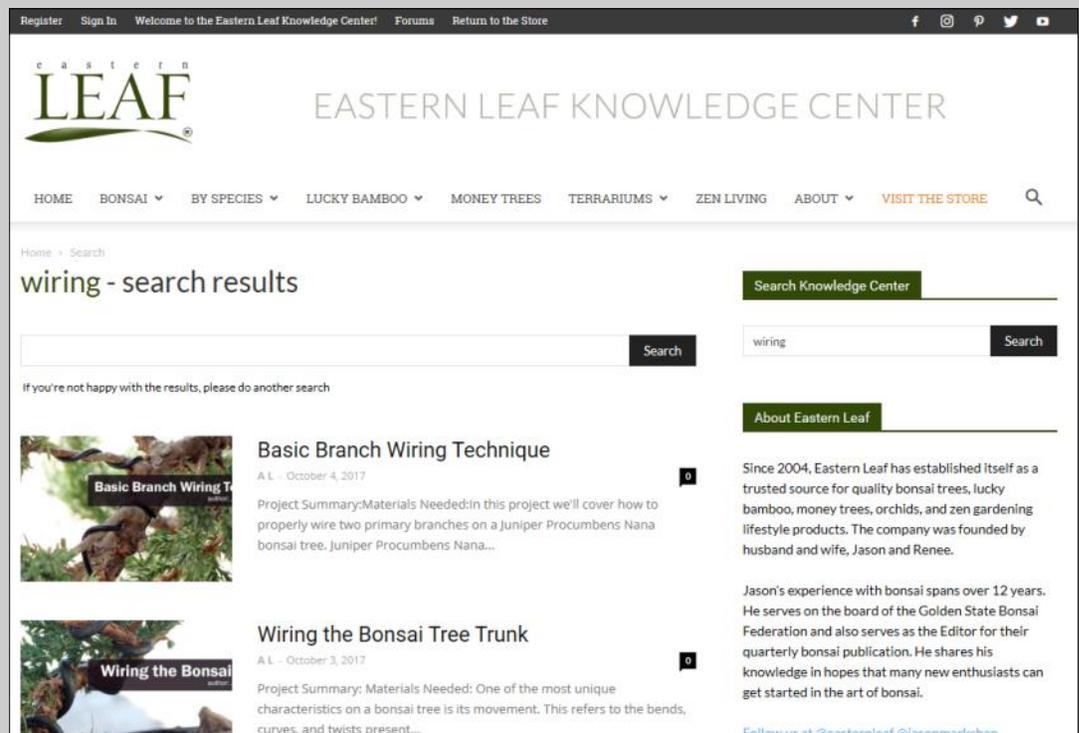
—Mike Blumenberg

## Book of the Month

*Eastern Leaf*, Jason Chan, Website and YouTube videos.

This will be a change of pace for our Book of the Month. Instead of reviewing one of the club's books or DVDs, I decided to review an on-line video from Eastern Leaf. Jason Chan is the owner of Eastern Leaf bonsai nursery. Jason gave a bonsai wiring demonstration at the club's July meeting (see pages 4 – 5), so I found an on-line video on the same subject. I thought it would be interesting to compare his in-person demonstration with a video. This particular video was well done with good video of techniques accompanied with Jason's straight-forward explanations. It was consistent with his demonstration at the club meeting but gave me an opportunity to reinforce a few key points and focus in on a couple key details. In addition to this basic wiring demonstration, Jason has dozens of other demonstrations covering bonsai tools, techniques, and tours. All free and readily accessible via YouTube. Check them out at [www.easternleaf.com](http://www.easternleaf.com).

—Mike Blumenberg



# A Juniper Procumbens ‘Nana’ Saikei

Editor’s Note: Ken Martin provided the July 2019 niche display. Technically not a bonsai (see definition below), saikei is a closely allied art. Here’s what Ken said about his saikei.

From Wikipedia: “Saikei is the art of creating tray landscapes that combine miniature living trees with soil, rocks, water, and related vegetation (like ground cover) in a single tray or similar container. A saikei landscape will remind the viewer of a natural location through its overall topography, choice of ground materials, and the species used in its plantings.”

In saikei, the landscape design of trees, rocks, and several plant species is more important than the perfection of the individual trees. A very satisfactory saikei can be put together relatively cheaply by a non-expert bonsai hobbyist.

Mike Blumenberg and I took a saikei workshop from Mr. Frank Goya and his assistants in October 2017 at the Golden State Bonsai Federation Convention in Riverside, CA. Mr. Goya grew all the trees and gathered the rocks used in this class. This planting is one result. Mike has a similar planting. (Mr. Goya was 94 years old at the time. He is planning to repeat the workshop in October 2019, when GSBF returns to Riverside for this year’s convention.)

You can see the triple trunk tree is planted on a hill behind the larger rock to appear to be three trees. Mr. Goya provided white sand to suggest a streambed. I preferred more subdued small black pebbles. The other plants in the container are right to left: dwarf mondo grass, bacopa “giant snowflake,” and red creeping thyme.

I was surprised that Mr. Goya does not use muck to build the hills nor does he use wire to anchor the trees in the tray. Instead, he uses an organic-based soil. He said after six months or so the roots will spread so the trees will stay positioned. It worked. For a saikei, the trees are usually small and light weight, so I’m sure this helped. He also suggested using very little if any fertilizer. I’m guessing the intent is to keep the trees small and in proper proportion in the landscape longer.

—Ken Martin



Photos by David Williams



**2019**

**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. 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 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](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).

**October 12 – 13, 2019 Oakland, California**

East Bay Bonsai Society: Annual Show at the Lakeside Park Garden Center at Lake Merritt, located at 666 Bellevue Avenue. Show hours are Saturday 10 AM – 5 PM and Sunday 10 AM – 4 PM with a demonstration at 1PM on Sunday by Sergio Cuan, notable bonsai artist awarded the “finest deciduous bonsai” at the US National Bonsai Exhibition. There will also be a benefit drawing and sale of bonsai and related materials. For additional information, visit [www.eastbaybonsai.org](http://www.eastbaybonsai.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](http://www.gsbfbonsai.org) for the full schedule of seminars, demonstrations, tours, workshops, and events.

**President’s Message** (Continued from page 1)

our 2020 program. Your suggestions for next year would be appreciated. If you have seen an interesting activity that you think our fellow club members would enjoy, please talk to Nancy.

At our July meeting, Jason Chan’s demonstration on wiring was a refresher class for many of us doing bonsai and gave good insight for members starting out. See pages 4 – 5 for the details. Wiring can be one of those tedious jobs of always either putting it on or taking it off, but it always produces immediate satisfaction!

**Election Time**

Our election of officers will be coming up in October. We will be calling for a nominating committee who will present a selection of nominees at our October meeting. All officers will be elected at our November meeting. The election is for the Executive Committee which consists of the President, Vice President, Secretary, and Treasurer. (The officers appoint all Standing Committee Chairs, who also sit on the board of directors.) If you can assist and take up one of the tasks for 2020, please let me or any board member know. A few people have stepped down in 2019, so there are several positions to fill.

The Golden State Bonsai Federation (GSBF) annual convention is in Riverside this year on October 24th – 27th. The early bird price break will be on until August 15th. Go to the GSBF website for the activities and application form. The convention consists of workshops; seminars; demonstrations; exhibitions; exhibition critiques; and a large vendor section. On the social side there will be lunches and dinners with raffles and auctions and the opportunity to catch up with fellow bonsai enthusiasts.

See you Thursday, August 15th. 🌳