



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
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](https://www.facebook.com/conejovalleybonsaisociety)

President's Message

Bonsai Teach Patience

By Marj Branson

As feared, the Conejo Valley Bonsai Society will not meet in person on our next scheduled date, May 21: the Westlake Village Community Center is still closed. City Hall will advise us when it is reopened.

On a brighter note, some bonsai activities have been kept up on social media. For example, some club members report sharing pictures of projects via email. And although closed until further notice for physical visits, the Huntington Library, Art Museum, and Botanical Gardens has been keeping up garden activities on their website.

Now, they have started a new blog titled "Hear and Now." Hosted by Giovana Romano Sanchez, the new blog will provide a series of short audio essays that explore objects and ideas found at The Huntington.

What Bonsai Can Teach

First out is an installment titled "What Bonsai Can Teach Us About Patience." Just what we need to cope with "the frustrations of coronavirus stay-at-home orders," this audio essay features interviews with Ted Matson, curator of The Huntington's bonsai collections, and Phillip Bloom, curator of the Chinese Garden and Director of the Center for East Asian Garden Studies at The Huntington.

A CVBS favorite bonsai teacher, Matson used to be a writer. "Whenever he felt writer's block coming on, he would visit his personal collection of bonsai trees, do a little pruning and pinching and enter a 'flow state.' Inevitably, the solution he was seeking would pop into his head." As he details in his interview, bonsai practice teaches us to patiently "respect ... the pace of nature."

Go to the Huntington's website (www.huntington.org) and scroll down to visit "Hear and Now."

Meanwhile, I was signed up for the April niche/May virtual niche. As I am looking after some of Ann Lofquist's trees, I changed the plan to an Ann Lofquist niche. (See story, page 6.)

I confess I made several attempts at photographing Ann's tree before we came out with a good photograph, an



Marj Branson

experience that leads me to a very important fact: Our club photographer—David Williams—should get a big hand of applause for the photography he has done for us over the years. From my humble experience, I have great appreciation for his taking excellent pictures for us. Thank you, David!

At the start of this Covid-19 virus, I spent extra time working on my trees, which made me very pleased with myself. However, over the past couple of weeks and warm weather, everything has taken off and all my work seems to have been lost as all my trees are spiky again. With the growing spurt, I now have wire that needs to come off. It is so true—a bonsai tree is never finished! Enjoy your trees and check the wires.

And while you're working on your trees, remember to take some pictures to send to Editor David Whiteside for our newsletter and let us know how you are coping with this all.

Finally, many spring bonsai shows have been canceled while others appear to be hoping to take place as scheduled. See Coming Events on page 8 for details as of press time.

Stay safe and enjoy your trees. 

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(Click on Email Address)

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CVBS Programs 2020

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

| | |
|--|---|
| January 16 | 7:30 PM: Brief Meeting followed by Workshop— BRING YOUR TREES |
| NOTE: SPECIAL DATE February 27 | 7:30 PM: Brief Meeting followed by Workshop— BRING YOUR TREES |
| March 19 | CANCELED DUE TO CORONAVIRUS 7:30 PM: Brief Meeting followed by DEMONSTRATION: Jim Barrett / Group Planting |
| April 16 | CANCELED DUE TO CORONAVIRUS 7:30 PM: Brief Meeting followed by Workshop— BRING YOUR TREES |
| May 21 | CANCELED DUE TO CORONAVIRUS 7:30 PM: Brief Meeting followed by DEMONSTRATION: Roy Nagatoshi / TBA |
| June 18 | 7:30 PM: Brief Meeting followed by Workshop— BRING YOUR TREES |
| July 16 | 7:30 PM: Brief Meeting followed by DEMONSTRATION: Gary Nanson / TBA |
| August 20 | 7:30 PM: Brief Meeting followed by Workshop and Swap Meet— BRING YOUR TREES AND OTHER ITEMS |
| September 17 | 7:30 PM: Brief Meeting followed by PEER CRITIQUES—BRING YOUR EXHIBITION TREES |
| October 3 – 4 | 17TH ANNUAL CVBS EXHIBITION Gardens of the World |
| October 15 | 7:30PM: Brief Meeting followed by Workshop— BRING YOUR TREES |
| November 19 | 7:30 PM: Brief Meeting with Club Elections followed by DEMONSTRATION: TBA |
| December 17 | 7:30 PM HOLIDAY POTLUCK, RAFFLE & AUCTION |

Azaleas, Pomegranates, and Deciduous Trees

By Jim Barrett

Editor's Note: While the Conejo Valley Bonsai Society's monthly meetings are suspended under the shelter-in-place policy due to the coronavirus pandemic, our trees still need attention. We will continue to publish Barrett's Bonsai Tips for the duration.

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. Repotting of azaleas can be done now. It might be wise to wait to move your azaleas from nursery containers to bonsai pots until next spring.

Pomegranates and olives may be potted from nursery containers to bonsai pots during June and early July. Protect any newly potted plants from direct sun for a week or so. Black pines should have had their candles pruned by the end of this month and certainly by the middle of July.

Deciduous trees such as elm, Japanese and trident maples, liquidambar, 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.

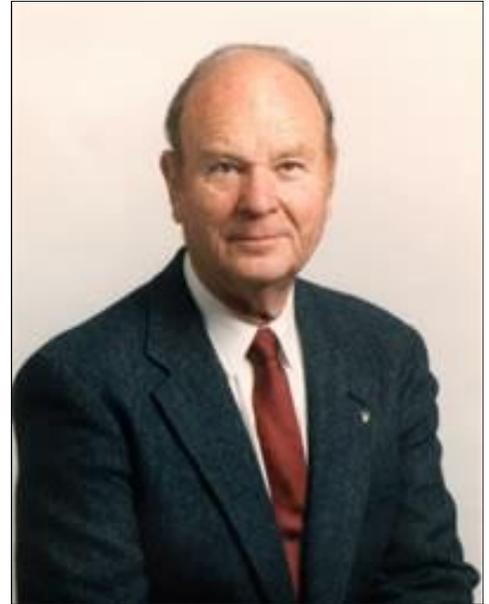
Fertilize trees that develop flower buds in early summer, such as crab apple, quince, ume (Japanese apricot), and wisteria with a low nitrogen, rich phosphate fertilizer. Repeat throughout the summer at least two more times.

Powdery mildew is already showing up on maples,

crapemyrtle, and quince. Spray with Benomyl or a good fungicide that is recommended for mildew.

Pine tip moth has been active again. The grub eats the center of new pine candles. 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 would be 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. 🌱



Jim Barrett

CVBS Niche Displays

Virtual Niche Display Program

In normal times, the Niche Program consists of club members setting up mini exhibition displays on a table in our meeting room. But with the Westlake Village City Hall Community Room shuttered for the duration of the coronavirus pandemic, this is not possible.

So we are doing virtual niche displays. We are asking niche display volunteers to set up their displays at home, photograph them, and send the pictures plus some comments (a paragraph or two will do) to our newsletter editor, David Whiteside.

For example, I was scheduled to do the niche display at our canceled April meeting, so provided photos for this (with a switch—see page 6), the May issue. Future volunteers, please note that we will be asking you to do the same as long as in-person meetings are not possible.

We encourage all members to sign up for the niche display! Please have a look at your 2020 calendar and let us know when you would like to present your display.

—Marj Branson

| 2020 Niche Displays | |
|---------------------|-------------------------|
| May | Nancy Smeets |
| June | Dick Winston |
| July | Volunteer Needed |
| August | Mike Blumenberg |
| Sept. | Volunteer Needed |

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 (except for this month of May, which has been canceled—see page 1) in the Westlake Village City Hall Community Room (31200 Oakcrest Drive, Westlake Village, CA 91361). Meetings start at 7:30 PM, and include occasional demonstrations by bonsai experts, workshops, critiques, member swap meets, and this award-winning newsletter.

It's inexpensive and easy to join. Annual dues are \$25 for one, or \$30 for couples. Simply write a check (made payable to the Conejo Valley Bonsai Society) and mail it to: CVBS Membership, c/o Marj Branson, 1169 Triunfo Canyon Road, Westlake Village, CA 91361.

—Nancy Smeets

From One Large Raft into Two Shohin Rafts

Editor's Note: This month's Member Project is one I did myself, but remember that everyone is invited to participate—you don't have to write a *War and Peace* length novel, just a few words to let your friends in the Conejo Valley Bonsai Society know how you and your bonsai are doing during the crisis.

Like many bonsai hobbyists, my collection includes several long-delayed projects. Some are simply cases of procrastination. Others I've postponed because I don't know what to do next with the particular specimen. A couple are two- or three-person operations that I've not organized yet and cannot be done under shelter-in-place rules. Still others have been waiting for the tree to develop in some way.

One of the latter in my case has been a moderately large juniper raft that took what seemed like forever to develop enough roots to move out of its training box into bonsai pottery. I acquired the tree in October 2010 in a Golden State Bonsai Federation Convention workshop with Mel Ikeda. The tree is a prostrata juniper (*Juniperus communis* 'Prostrata'), and the workshop cost \$105.

Much to my frustration, the raft failed to put out roots along the length of the original trunk for many years. Meanwhile, several of the original branches, which were supposed to develop into new trunks, died back. This left one long, empty stretch of the raft. Making matters worse, the barren portion was straight and uninteresting.

Meanwhile, I wired the new trunks and their branches in anticipation of eventually moving the raft into a bonsai pot. Due to the poor root development, some of these also died back.

Enter the coronavirus pandemic. Sheltering at home, with plenty of extra time on my hands, one day I took a good look at this juniper raft and discovered that it had finally developed a halfway decent root system. I also found that the training box had rotted out. I decided it was time to act.

After removing the tree from what was left of the wood box, I became convinced that the straight, barren portion of the raft was useless and had to go. So, I sawed the tree in half, removing most of the unwanted portion and creating, in effect, two rafts.

The new raft that includes the original root ball has a cluster of three trunks with some nice movement down low plus a fourth, less interesting trunk some distance away (see photo at right). Because the root system needs further development, I kept all four trunks to help uptake nutrition and feed the roots.

Later I will remove the lone, boring trunk at the left end of the raft altogether. My intention is to end up with a shohin size three-trunk raft. It's currently in an unglazed oval bonsai pot; eventually, when I can cut away the old trunk closer to the clump of three new trunks, I will move it into a smaller, shallow pot more appropriate for a shohin composition.

I put the other raft into a small, rectangular, unglazed bonsai pot after doing minor trimming of the roots. Its root system is weak, so I left most of them undisturbed. To preserve as many roots as possible, I left a stretch of the original trunk at the right, which forced the raft into an awkward position in the pot. That right-hand portion of what is now the base of the raft is not needed for the final composition, so I will remove it when I repot in a year or two.

—David Whiteside

Preparing the prostrata juniper for placement in a training box during the GSBF workshop, October 2010 (top).

The juniper raft in its training box (second from top). It's December 2017 and there still are precious few roots.

The first new shohin raft with what's left of the original tree's root ball on the right (second from bottom). The trunk at the far left will be removed later, creating a three-trunk raft. It's April 2020.

The second shohin raft, a five-trunk composition (one trunk is hidden in this photo) created from what originally was the apex of the prostrata juniper (bottom).



Photos by David Whiteside



Bjorn BJORHOLM and Boon MANAKITIVIPART

By Ken Martin

YouTube Video Review

Shohin Bonsai from Cutting, Parts 1 and 2

Bjorn BJORHOLM

Eisei-en Bonsai (Mount Juliet, Tennessee)

Bonsai-U Series

Available both on YouTube and Eisei-en Bonsai's website (www.eisei-en.com)

Bjorn BJORHOLM started in Part 1 showing three Itoigawa shimpaku junipers in small containers started from cuttings approximately three, four, and seven years ago. The youngest tree had two pencil-sized trunks, which he wired then bent and twisted into a contorted, compact shape. The intermediate tree just had the wire removed and will be allowed to grow for another two years until it looks like the third tree, which is now ready for initial styling.

Bjorn, in Part 2, worked on the seven-year old Itoigawa by removing clutter from the lower part of the branches as well as crotch growth. He then decided which branches were required to be alive and which could be jinned (turned into deadwood). When finished, he had a very presentable pre-bonsai.

There is a lot of good information packed in these two videos totaling 47 minutes. A couple of things that I had not seen or thought about:

1. Seven years from a cutting to a pre-bonsai (I think, at my age, I'll look for shortcuts)

2. He left a bunch of jins purposely very long and even wired some into twisted shapes to mirror what he was going to do with the living branches. He said the jins can be shortened later if desired. They look surprisingly good now.

Bjorn appears to be very well trained and is very articulate. Although he resides in the middle South, the techniques and care discussed should apply to our area. The video and audio qualities were excellent. Highly recommended if you want to learn something about shohin bonsai.



Bjorn BJORHOLM with display of shohin sized bonsai (above).

The finished shohin Itoigawa shimpaku juniper (right).



Screen captures by David Whiteside

YouTube Video Review

Deciduous Bonsai Training and Health

Boon MANAKITIVIPART

Go to "Deciduous Bonsai Training and Health" on Bonsai Empire's YouTube Channel

Boon MANAKITIVIPART is located in the East San Francisco Bay area. This 20-minute video is a brief overview to answer a viewer's questions about how to mitigate branch die off on a deciduous tree and how to train a deciduous tree. It covers both potting methods and some basic training techniques.

Boon started with a birch. His focus for this tree was to get rid of the nursery soil, which he said was the main contributor to the poor health of the tree. He then potted the tree. He took the tree out of the nursery pot, cut off 1/2 the lower root mass, bare rooted it, and washed it before potting it in a deep training pot.

Everyone has their own techniques. Boon put a fairly thick layer of pumice in the bottom of the pot prior to placing the tree. He then used a standard 1/3 pumice, 1/3 lava rock, and 1/3 akadama for the soil mix. He briefly discussed using soil mixes without akadama. His technique of settling the soil using chopsticks, brush, and tamper, then tapping the side of the pot was interesting to watch.

The use of pumice in the bottom of the pot surprised me a bit. Boon did say he doesn't do this for a shallower pot.

He then spent some time with a gray hornbeam briefly talking about when to wire (April or May in his location), when to trim, shape of branches, etc. He demonstrated branch trimming for shape.

This video does not contain very much detailed information, but again it is only 20 minutes long. 🌳



Boon MANAKITIVIPART with the two deciduous trees he demonstrated (above).

Shimpaku Foliage on a California Juniper

Editor's Note: Life member Ann Lofquist has moved to Shelburne Falls, a small town in the Berkshires of north-western Massachusetts. We are presenting one of Ann's trees in this issue, although Marj Branson was scheduled to provide the niche display at CVBS's April 2020 meeting, which was canceled due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Marj is caring for some of Ann's trees until she is able to retrieve them, so Marj provided the photograph from her home in Westlake Village while Ann contributed comments from the Berkshires. Here's what Ann said about the tree we picked for this issue's virtual niche display.

Photo by Marj Branson

The niche tree is a collected California juniper with grafted shimpaku juniper foliage. I think it was collected around six years ago, but I'm not sure. The left branch was ugly and straight, so I replaced the jin with a dead branch from a different juniper!

I think this tree is something of a cross between an informal upright and a bunjin. When I next have the tree at my new home, I will thin the foliage and reduce the apex.

—Ann Lofquist



Ann Lofquist's shimpaku juniper foliage grafted onto a collected California juniper rootstock (right). Note the interesting jin on the left—it came from another tree to replace what Ann calls an 'ugly and straight' branch.

Library

Mobile-Mode Bonsai Library Continues

Just a reminder that while our club meetings are suspended amid the Covid-19 outbreak, I am providing the CVBS Book Mobile! If you want a good bonsai book or DVD to review while staying home, then give me a call and request a book, pamphlet, periodical, or DVD. We'll arrange for it to be sanitized and delivered (or picked up). For a complete list of our library holdings—books, pamphlets, DVDs, and periodicals—please see page 7 of the April 2020 issue of this newsletter.

—Mike Blumenberg

Book of the Month

The Bonsai Handbook, by David Prescott with consultant editor Colin Lewis. © 2001 IMM Lifestyle Books. 160 pages. \$19.99 (paperback, on Amazon.com)

Photo by Mike Blumenberg

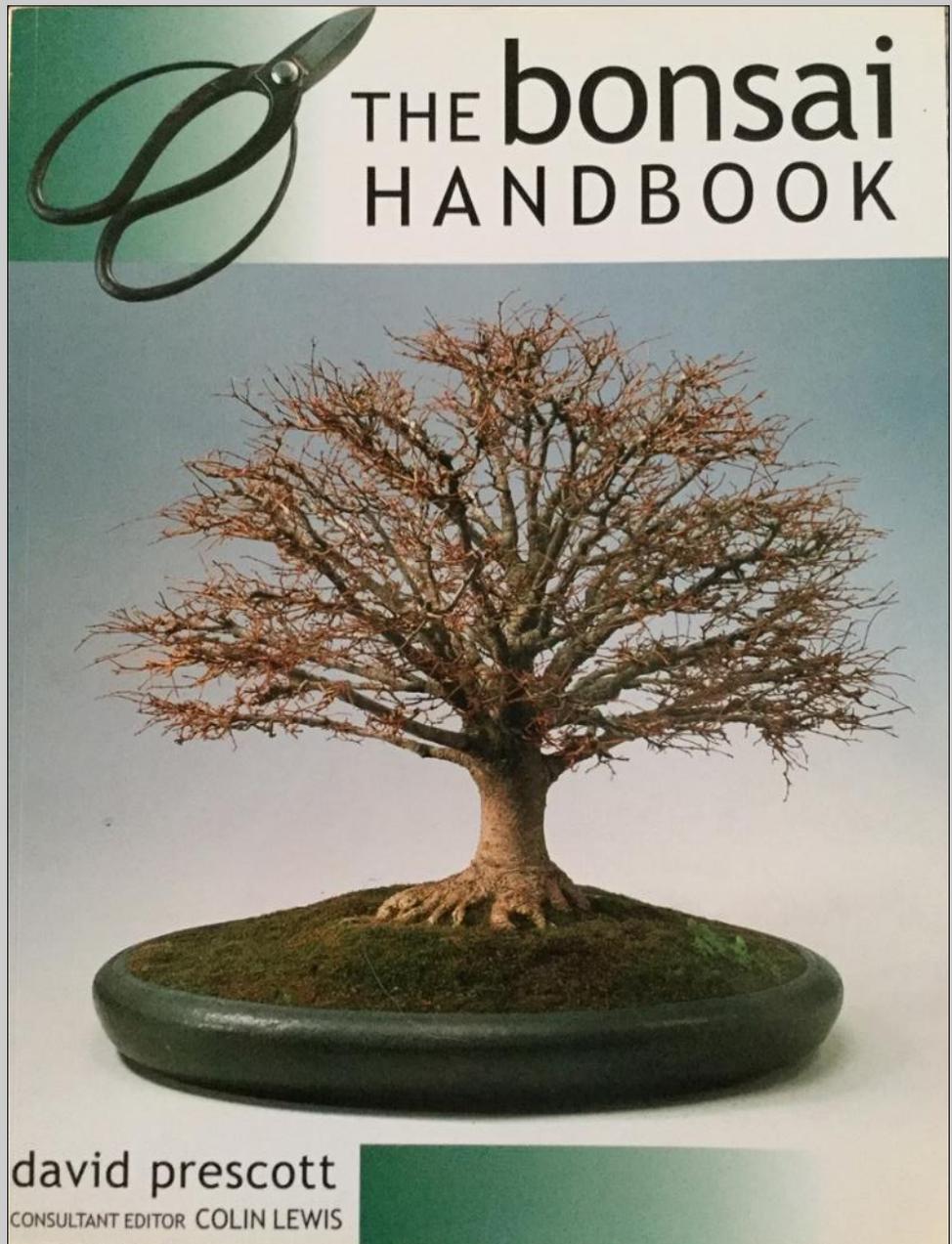
Our next Book of the Month is *The Bonsai Handbook* by David Prescott, an award-winning bonsai practitioner and admired teacher of the art. The book was donated to the CVBS library last year (2019) but hasn't been checked out yet.

As you would expect with any "handbook," this one provides thorough coverage of all things related to bonsai. It covers both indoor and outdoor varieties and is full of practical information about cultivation, propagation, and pruning. It is a guide both for newcomers to the art as well as for bonsai gardeners with some knowledge of the subject.

The handbook describes, in clear text, step-by-step artworks, and detailed photographs, the anatomy and the art of bonsai. It describes the rules—and also describes how they can be broken.

This book will enable beginners to start their own bonsai collection, whether of home-grown or bought trees, and to keep their bonsai healthy and in good shape. The chapter titled "Your own bonsai collection, where and how to begin" caught my eye because it expands on my newsletter article, "Overcoming Beginner's Jitters with CVBS" (February 2020, page 8). This chapter offers guidance, including a detailed checklist that a newcomer can use to select a tree and start a collection. Check it out at our next bonsai meeting (whenever that may be) or give me a call if you would like to make arrangements for the mobile bonsai bookmobile (see above).

—Mike Blumenberg



Please note that two DVDs are missing and we have no record of who last checked them out. If you have one of these in your possession, please contact me and we'll arrange to return it to inventory.

⇒ DVD: *Scale Junipers* by Bonsai Boon

⇒ DVD: *Bonsai Pottery*

2020

May BE SURE TO CONFIRM STATUS OF ALL EVENTS AHEAD OF TIME

Now – June 15, 2020 San Marino, California HUNTINGTON CLOSED UNTIL FURTHER NOTICE

Lifelines/Timelines: Exploring The Huntington's Collections Through Bonsai. Visitors will discover an expansive new way to look at miniature trees in "Lifelines/Timelines: Exploring The Huntington's Collections Through Bonsai," on view March 14 through June 15 at The Huntington Library, Art Museum, and Botanical Gardens. The exhibition, one of the keystone events of The Huntington's yearlong Centennial Celebration, asks the question: How do five venerable bonsai trees relate in age and historical significance to masterpieces of literature and art? The Huntington is located at 1151 Oxford Road, San Marino, CA.

May 16 – 17, 2020 Sacramento, California

Satsuki Aikokai Association of Sacramento: Hosts our Annual show of flowering Satsuki azalea bonsai at the Shepard Garden Center, 3330 McKinley Blvd. Hours are Saturday 10:00 AM – 5:00 PM, and Sunday 10:00 AM – 4:00 PM, with demonstrations at 1:00 PM on both days. Satsuki information booth, vendors, raffles, etc. For more information contact Ronn Pigram at 916-428-8505 or email satsukiaikokaisac@sbcglobal.net.

May 16 – 17, 2020 San Gabriel, California

The Chino Bonsai Club: presents its Inaugural Bonsai Exhibit at the San Gabriel Valley Medical Center (separate building across the street) 261 S. Junipero Serra Dr. Hours are Saturday from 9:30 AM to 8:00 PM and Sunday from 9:30 AM to 3:30 PM. Exciting events will take place such as round robin demonstrations, bonsai demonstrations, vendor and club sales, raffles, auctions, exhibit, and Saturday's dinner reception. On both days, round robin demonstrations begin at 9:30 AM and David Nguy's bonsai demonstration will be at 1:00 PM. For more information, please contact David Nguy at (323)842-6188 or Jerry Garcia at (909)270-7776.

May 17, 2020 Van Nuys, California

Sansui Kai of Southern California: Annual Bonsai Exhibition to be held on May 17, 2020, at the Japanese Garden. 6100 Woodley Ave. Hours are 10:00 AM to 4:00 PM. Demonstration at 1:00 PM. Demo tree will be raffled at end of demonstration. Sales table with member and club bonsai material available all day. Annual Bonsai Exhibition and sale at the beautiful Japanese Garden. Free admission to the bonsai exhibit.

CANCELED May 30 – 31, 2020 Oakland, California

Bay Area Satsuki Aikokai: presents their annual Satsuki Azalea Bonsai Show at the Lakeside Park Garden Center, 666 Bellevue Ave., Lake Merritt. Hours are on Saturday from 10:00 AM to 5:00 PM and on Sunday from 10:00 AM to 4:00 PM. Featuring bonsai Satsuki azaleas in full flower bloom. Expert demonstration and raffle on Saturday from 1:00 to 3:00 PM. Educational forums all day. Member sales with beginner and Japan imported material. Vendor sales. Free admission. For more information, contact George Haas at gwhaas@comcast.net. Visit our website at satsukiazaleabonsai.org.

CANCELED May 30 – 31, 2020 Santa Barbara, California

Bonsai Club of Santa Barbara: Annual Bonsai Exhibition and Plant Sale in the Fellowship Hall at Trinity Lutheran Church, 909 N. La Cumbre Road, Santa Barbara (corner of Foothill Road). Hours are Saturday 11:00 AM – 4:00 PM and Sunday Noon – 4:00 PM. Demonstrations at 1:00 PM: Mel Ikeda on Saturday, Ann Erb on Sunday. Free admission. For more information, contact Joe Olson (805) 964-0869, email joeuycaseed@gmail.com, or visit <http://www.santabarbarabonsai.org/>.

June

CANCELED June 6 – 7, 2020 San Mateo, California

Sei Boku Bonsai Kai: 37th Anniversary Bonsai Show located at the San Mateo Garden Center, 605 Parkside Way (at Beresford Park). Hours are 10:00 AM to 4:00 PM, both days. Saturday demonstration performed by Gordon Deeg from 1:00 to 3:00 PM. Sunday demonstration performed by Valerie Monroe from 1:00 to 3:00 PM. Demo trees for raffles! Also, there will be door prizes, tree clinic, vendor sales, plant sales. Free Admission. Contact Marsha Mekisich for more information at Springhill.2@outlook.com. Visit our web site at <http://www.seibokubonsai.org/?sec=show>.

CANCELED June 13 – 14, 2020 Oakland, California

Suiseki Societies of Northern California, California Shohin Society and Bay Area Shohin Society enthusiastically present The Second Annual Bay Area Suiseki and Shohin Show at the Lakeside Park Garden Center, 666 Bellevue Ave., Lake Merritt. Hours are Saturday from 10:00 AM to 5:00 PM and Sunday from 10:00 AM to 4:00 PM. This show will feature Suiseki viewing stones and Shohin bonsai from clubs around the San Francisco Bay Area. There will be demonstrations and large vendor and club sale areas. For more information, contact Lisa Harper at lisaharper@me.com.

June 20 – 21, 2020 Livermore, California

Valley Bonsai Society: 12th Annual Show at Alden Lane Nursery, 981 Alden Lane. Show hours are 10:00 AM – 4:00 PM with a demonstration at 1:00 PM on both days. The finished tree will be raffled off at the end of the demonstrations. Bonsai pots, soil, etc. available for purchase. Admission is free.

August

August 8, 2020 Mateo, California

Bonsai Society of San Francisco, East Bay Bonsai Society, Kusamura Bonsai, Midori Bonsai, San Jose Betsuin Bonsai, and Sei Boku Bonsai Kai: sponsoring a Bonsai Flea Market/Swap Meet at the San Mateo Garden Center, 605 Parkside Way, San Mateo. Saturday only, from 10:00 AM to 3:00 PM. Admission is free to the public. To reserve a table for \$10 contact Bill McDonald at bill@walter-mcdonald.com or (650) 678-5517.