



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

President's Message

Fall Exhibition Canceled

By Marj Branson

Our Conejo Valley Bonsai Society remains in a form of bonsai shut down—all our club activities have become by remote. The earliest we may be able to resume in-person meetings is December 2020, and the odds are against even that.

I have been in touch with the Westlake Village Community Center to see when they envision reopening their community rooms. They are still closed and don't have a reopening date, but hope to have more information by October 1st when they do their planning for 2021. It looks like we will not have any further meetings during 2020.

My concern is for our Holiday Potluck dinner party. We will see if the center will be available for it. If we do not have it, what would you like to do in its place?

We are starting a new department in our newsletter. Our club advisor, Ken Fuentes, is going to take bonsai questions from members. In future issues, he will take one topic and share his thoughts and suggestions. This starts with this issue (see page 8). If you are having a problem with one of your trees, send your query to:

Advisor
Ken Fuentes
Advisor@CVBS-bonsai.org

Our October bonsai exhibition at the Gardens of the World is canceled. In its place it has been suggested that members take pictures of their show trees and send them to our newsletter editor, David Whiteside, so we can have a show via our newsletter. Please give this some thought. And start grooming your trees in preparation. You could do the photography in October, send the photographs to David for inclusion in our November or December newsletter.

The Bonsai-a-Thon at the Huntington is coming up in February 2021 and is the planning stage. The bonsai community is of mixed feelings. The Huntington has welcomed us to hold it, however, it must be entirely outside. There are many pros



Marj Branson

and cons to this idea—let me know if you would attend or work at it if held outside only?

Bonsai Empire continues its program of online bonsai classes. Its founder, Oscar Jonker, has extended a 20% club discount to CVBS members wanting to take either the Fundamentals or Intermediate classes. Hurry, the offer expires soon. Here's how to sign up:

1. Go to: www.bonsaiempire.com/courses
2. Navigate to the Fundamentals or the Intermediate course
3. Click on enroll now
4. Register your account
5. Enter your discount code: CVBS
6. Click "Apply"—the 20% discount is now applied
7. Select your payment method
8. After payment you can start your online course at any time

I am assuming everyone's trees are in top notch shape. I have been doing some fine tuning as my experience with my photographs show every imperfection. David Williams—you are an artist as your photos always look better!

Stay safe! 🍄

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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	CANCELED DUE TO CORONAVIRUS 7:30 PM: Brief Meeting followed by Workshop— BRING YOUR TREES
July 16	CANCELED DUE TO CORONAVIRUS 7:30 PM: Brief Meeting followed by DEMONSTRATION: Gary Nanson / TBA
August 20	CANCELED DUE TO CORONAVIRUS 7:30 PM: Brief Meeting followed by Workshop and Swap Meet— BRING YOUR TREES AND OTHER ITEMS
September 17	CANCELED DUE TO CORONAVIRUS 7:30 PM: Brief Meeting followed by PEER CRITIQUES—BRING YOUR EXHIBITION TREES
October 3 – 4	CANCELED DUE TO CORONAVIRUS 17TH ANNUAL CVBS EXHIBITION Gardens of the World
October 15	CANCELED DUE TO CORONAVIRUS 7:30PM: Brief Meeting followed by Workshop— BRING YOUR TREES
November 19	CANCELED DUE TO CORONAVIRUS 7:30 PM: Brief Meeting with Club Elections followed by DEMONSTRATION: TBA
December 17	7:30 PM HOLIDAY POTLUCK, RAFFLE & AUCTION

Summer Chores for Every Bonsai Enthusiast

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.

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.

Rotate Your Trees

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

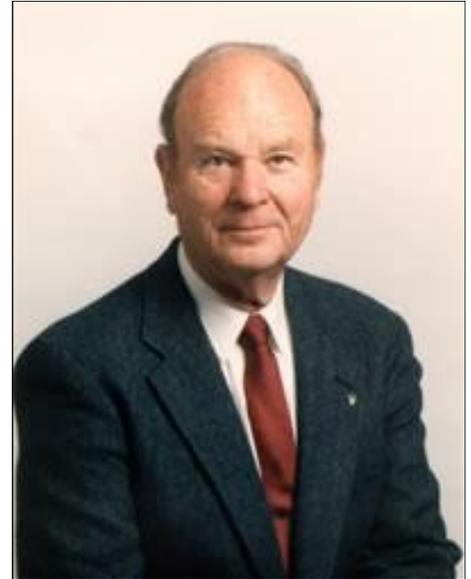
buildup in soil above 80 or 90 degrees tends to slow growth. This is natural. Do not water if the soil is still wet. It takes practice and knowledge of your plants' needs to keep them healthy and happy. Fortunately, most plants survive most mistakes.

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. 🌱



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, Mike Blumenberg was scheduled to do the niche display at our canceled July meeting, so he provided photos for this, the August 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	
August	Marj Branson
Sept.	Ben Conway
Oct.	David Whiteside
Nov.	David Williams
Dec.	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 August, which has been canceled—see pages 1 and 2) 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

Twisted Pomegranate in Large Growing Pot

Editor's Note: This month's Member Project is by Damon and Wendy DuBois. Please 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.

Wendy and I purchased this twisted pomegranate (*Punica granatum*) in February of 2018 from Fuji Bonsai Nursery in Sylmar. It was one of two that we got at the same time. We repotted it later that spring in an overly large bonsai pot. Partly because we already had the pot, and partly to give it room to grow and develop. This coming spring it will be repotted into a smaller, shallower pot.

The rate that pomegranates grow makes them really fun trees to work with because they react very quickly to whatever changes you make.

The base of the trunk is starting to develop some nice taper, although about a month ago I noticed it was developing a slight reverse taper. This seems to have been caused by a large root on the back of the tree that rose up almost an inch above the soil before connecting to the trunk. This seemed to be feeding in more nutrition above the base of the tree. I've removed the root and expect the slight inverse taper to disappear as the tree continues to age now that the offending root is gone.

It's currently being allowed to grow and hasn't been shaped much recently, so the profile of the canopy is a bit messy at the moment. I also did a small trunk chop near the apex to get rid of a section of heavily scarred trunk, so the apex is currently a bit sparse. However, we've done a lot of work structurally to the tree and we feel it is set up well to develop into a worthy bonsai!

—Damon and Wendy DuBois



Photos by Damon DuBois



Damon and Wendy DuBois' twisted pomegranate as it appears now (top right).

Here's how the twisted pomegranate appeared a few months after it was purchased in 2018 (left).

And here it is in March 2019 (right), in the large bonsai pot Damon and Wendy used to allow the tree plenty of growing room.



Two Bonsai Nursery Owners Go Online

By Ken Martin

YouTube Video Reviews

This month I reviewed two bonsai nursery owners' presentations about shimpaku bonsai. Both are on YouTube

Jason Chan of Eastern Leaf Bonsai Nursery. 13 minutes

“Creating a Bonsai Tree from a 1 Gallon Nursery Shimpaku Juniper—Setting Aside the Shears”

In this 13-minute video, Eastern Leaf Bonsai Nursery owner Jason Chan styles a starter shimpaku juniper bonsai tree in a 1 gallon can. He discusses a way of practicing your design by setting aside the bonsai shears until after wiring. He goes over branch selection as well as techniques on dealing with leggy growth and tricks on styling the apex. Jason preserves his options by wiring all the branches before deciding which aren't needed. Good for beginning bonsai folks.



Screen captures by Ken Martin

Bjorn Bjorholm of Eisei-en Bonsai. 13 minutes

“What the Heck Is a Shimpaku Juniper?”

Bjorn Bjorholm, owner of Eisei-en Bonsai, looks at the meaning and history of Shimpaku Juniper—where did the term originate in Japan, what does it apply to today, and what are the differences between the term's varieties and cultivars? I have heard explanations from different folks like Gary Ishii, owner of Chikugo-En Bonsai Nursery, who have been to Japan and whose explanation was fairly accurate, but I was still confused. No more! Bjorn clears everything up—at least for me. This video is a must for anyone interested at all in juniper bonsai. 🌲



South African Fig Comes to California

Editor's Note: Mike Blumenberg was scheduled to provide the niche display at CVBS's July 2020 meeting, which was canceled due to the Covid-19 pandemic. So Mike set up a complete display in his yard and photographed it himself. Here's what Mike said about the tree he picked for this issue's virtual niche display.

My niche tree is a Natal fig (*Ficus natalensis*). I purchased it in May 2019 from the Potomac Bonsai Society's annual show and sale at the National Bonsai & Penjing Museum in Washington, DC.

I happened to be there because I was working in Annapolis, MD, last May. I decided to visit the bonsai museum before flying home on Friday afternoon. My timing was good because the Potomac Bonsai Society was setting up their annual show and sale.

It was a pretty large sales tent, almost as big as the annual Golden State Bonsai Federation's Bonsai-a-Thon at The Huntington Library, Art Museum, and Botanical Gardens in San Marino, CA. It was close to my birthday, so I decided to splurge and buy a tree.

I really like the ficus and enjoyed speaking with the artist, who had emigrated from South Africa and specialized in South African tree varieties as bonsai. (The photograph below shows me with the artist.)

I hand carried this tree through the airport and got a few admiring comments, several questions ("is that real?"), and lots of strange looks. One guy told me that there was no way TSA would let me carry it aboard the airplane. I was a little nervous and was prepared to explain that it was my "therapy tree," but TSA didn't seem very concerned.

After I got it home, I let it adjust to life in California. After a year here, I repotted it. It seems pretty happy now. It has grown new roots over the rock and has even added a few air roots reaching down to the soil. I've removed the original wiring and added a bit of my own. It's still taking shape, but it is one of my favorite trees.

—Mike Blumenberg

That's Mike (on the left in photo right) with the original artist.



Photos by Mike Blumenberg

The *Ficus natalensis* is a root-over-rock style with air roots (far right).

A closeup photo of the Natal fig's roots over rock (right).



Mike Blumenberg's Natal fig (*Ficus natalensis*) on display with hangings and companion plant (above).



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

Practical Bonsai by W. Paul Lesniewicz and Hideo Kato. (Marlow, Buckinghamshire, United Kingdom: Foulsham & Co. Ltd., 1991).

The Conejo Valley Bonsai Society library holds several books that provide broad overviews of bonsai, and this book fits that description. It is relatively short, but it provides a comprehensive review of the history of bonsai, common styles, common species, and basic techniques.

It's a good choice for someone new to bonsai, but also includes a few recommendations that I haven't read in other bonsai books. For example, the author suggests wrapping the trunk of a tree in wire to encourage the trunk to thicken more rapidly. I haven't heard of this tip anywhere else and I wonder if any club members have tried it.

The book also includes many simple illustrations that effectively illustrate different techniques. One illustration provides guidance on branch selection, showing which branches to keep and which to trim away (see photo, below, left). It also includes many photographs of show-ready trees so the reader can correlate techniques to results.

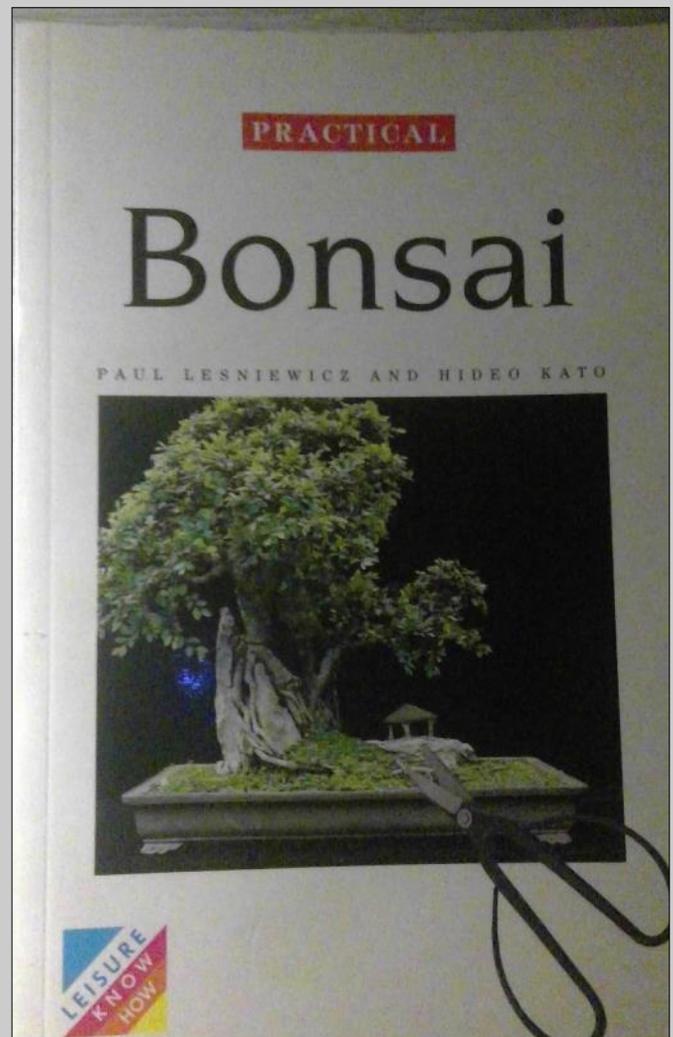
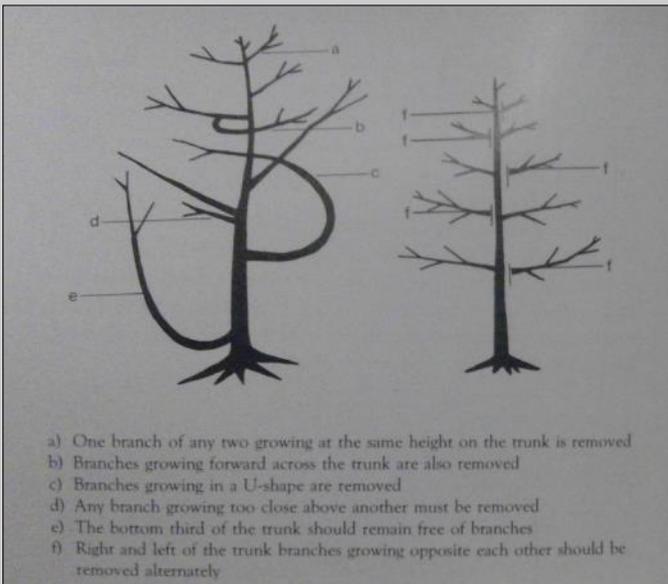
The Bonsai Bookmobile remains open for business, so let me know if you're interested in borrowing this book or any others from the library.

—Mike Blumenberg

***Practical Bonsai* (right) is a great choice for beginners but also includes some tips for more advanced hobbyists.**

This illustration (below) helps explain the concepts behind branch selection.

Photos by Mike Blumenberg



2020

BE SURE TO CONFIRM STATUS OF ALL EVENTS AHEAD OF TIME

August

CANCELED August 22 - 23, 2020 Santa Rosa, California

Redwood Empire Bonsai Society: 37th Annual Bonsai Show at the Santa Rosa Veterans Memorial Building, 1351 Maple Ave. Hours are Saturday 10:00 AM to 5:00 PM and Sunday 10:00 AM to 4:00 PM. Featuring Kathy Shaner bonsai demonstration, both days from 1:00 to 3:00 PM. Demo trees to be raffled. See largest bonsai exhibit, San Francisco Suiseki Kai stone exhibit, large vendor area, large member sales, and exciting silent auctions. Free admission and parking. Free refreshments. Contact Bob Shimon for additional information shimon@mcn.org or visit our website www.rebsbonsai.org.

September

CANCELED September 19, 2020 Modesto, California

Modesto Bonsai Club: 38th Annual Spring Show at the Stanislaus County Harvest Hall, 3800 Cornucopia Way. Show hours are Saturday, 10:00 AM – 4:00 PM, with a demonstration at 1:00 PM by Sam Adina. Exhibits, sales, plants, pots, tools and more, multiple raffles. Free admission and parking. Benefit drawing Saturday, will include demonstration tree and many bonsai and bonsai related items. For additional information visit our Club Facebook Page Modesto Bonsai Club, or contact our Club President Peter Camarena, 209-529-1759 or email pete.camarena@sbcglobal.net.

CANCELED September 19 - 20, 2020 San Andreas, California

Mother Lode Bonsai Club: Sixth Annual Bonsai Show at the San Andreas Public Library, 1299 Gold Hunter Road (off Mt. Ranch Road.), San Andreas. Show hours on both days are 10:00 AM to 4:00 PM. Demonstrations at 11:00 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

CANCELED October 3 – 4, 2020 Thousand Oaks, California

Conejo Valley Bonsai Society: 17th Annual Bonsai Exhibition at the Resource Center at the Gardens of the World, 2001 Thousand Oak Blvd. Hours are 9:00 AM – 4:00 PM both days. Demonstrations in the Bandstand at 1:00 PM Saturday and Sunday. Free Admission. No sales of bonsai related items. For information, call Marj Branson at 805-373-1330 or visit our web site at www.cvbsbonsai.org.

CANCELED October 30 - November 1, 2020 Nella, California

Golden State Bonsai Federation (GSBF): 2020 Convention 43 "MISSION: BONSAI" to be held at the Hotel Mission De Oro, 13070 S. Highway 33. Hotel rooms \$121 + tax (two night minimum). Featuring headliner Yasuo Mitsuya of Japan. A full slate of workshops, seminars and critiques. There will be two banquet dinners, Friday and Saturday evenings with live auction and raffle. Vendors from northern and southern California in one huge location. Online Registration Date: July 1, 2020. Reduced convention price of \$199.00 (watch for early bird and club bundle registration discounts). For further information, contact Bob Hilvers at bonsaiguui@comcast.net.

Bonsai Guidelines

What To Do With a Defective Bonsai Trunk?

By Ken Fuentes

When is it worth your time and creativity to invest in a trunk defect?

This is the bonsai in your collection that has evaded all of your attempts to cut in a design. You've pondered over what to do with this defect for months, maybe years. Before taking any shortcuts like air layering or removing, know that patience and time heal most defects.

A bonsai by its structure will tell you what styles are suitable. Once you have narrowed down your options, there might be a defect that forces you to decide if this defect should be hidden or featured and highlighted.

I have found that refinement of the bonsai will help integrate the defect into your final design, but there are exceptions. Since time is progress, there are some conditions that are not suited for correction, making the decision to invest your time easier:

- The defect is an eye piker and turning the trunk slightly left or right is not an option due to root lay-

out.

- The defect contains a sharp 45-degree angle or pigeon breast.
- The defect creates a reverse taper on a non-tropical, or slow-growing variety.

All other defects can be corrected or improved over time. This defect can tell a story, make a bonsai unique, and can add character. Give patience a try and you will be pleasantly surprised with the results. 🌳



CVBS Advisor Ken Fuentes