



conejo valley

BONSAI society

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A member of the Golden State Bonsai Federation 

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President's Message

Covid-19 and Our Future

By Marj Branson

Greetings to my fellow bonsai enthusiasts. This ongoing Covid-19 pandemic is certainly putting a cloud over future Conejo Valley Bonsai Society activities and restricting our socializing.

The biggest blow to our club's plans is that the City of Westlake Village has confirmed that its Community Rooms will remain closed through the balance of 2020. The immediate impact is that our annual Holiday Potluck, Raffle, and Auction cannot be held.

"The Los Angeles County Public Health Orders do not allow any gatherings, events, or parties with non-household members, especially in confined or indoor spaces, where it is difficult to maintain a six feet distance from others," Taylor Pineda, the city's Community Services Coordinator, said in a letter.

The Community Rooms will remain closed until official health orders have deemed it safe to reopen. The City of Westlake Village's Community Center is in Los Angeles County, so they must follow the LA guidelines. They will let



Marj Branson

us know as soon as they plan to reopen. This raises the question of CVBS

Continued on page 17

Bonsai Guidelines

Using Sacrificial Branches

By Ken Fuentes

The bonsai on page 17 is a 2.5-inch high Burt Davy's fig (*Ficus Burt Davyi*). When you're working on mame bonsai (2 to 8 inches from base of the trunk to the apex), it is important to apply Bonsai Guidelines on all dimensions to create the illusion of an old tree. A resource for basic guidelines is Brent Walston's essay, "The Rules of Bonsai," which can be found at various sites on the Internet.

In this case, the tree was buried deep in the container, so I raised it and placed it facing the sun to encourage the growth of branches as close to the soil line as possible. A few branches started lower, and I let them grow to about 10 inches long. But they began to create a reverse taper, so I reduced them to a few inches (see the blue dot in



Ken Fuentes

(Continued on page 17)

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)

Contact Us

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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 SEE PAGE 1 REGARDING OUR VIRTUAL EXHIBITION
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	CANCELED DUE TO CORONAVIRUS 7:30 PM HOLIDAY POTLUCK, RAFFLE & AUCTION

Autumnal Equinox Brings Fall Chores

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.

October is a very good month to clean up Japanese black pines and junipers. If you have a black pine bonsai, finish pruning the unwanted new growth leaving one, two, or three new candles on the tips of each branch or twig that was pruned earlier this summer.

How many candles you leave is determined by your design goals for the tree [and] whether the new growth is on the outer limits of the tree or in the interior. Old needles (discolored) should be removed. New or fresh needles should remain until December or January. Leaving these new healthy needles on through the fall should keep the tree at its best. Cutting long needles shorter will allow sunlight to penetrate into the interior of the tree, and help to build stronger growth on the weak and stunted interior candles and twigs.

Junipers may be cleaned of all dead or discolored foliage. Prune the "hanger downers" and the "pointer uppers" unless you plan to wire them into a more horizontal position.

October is also a good time to remove old wire and rewire for detail.

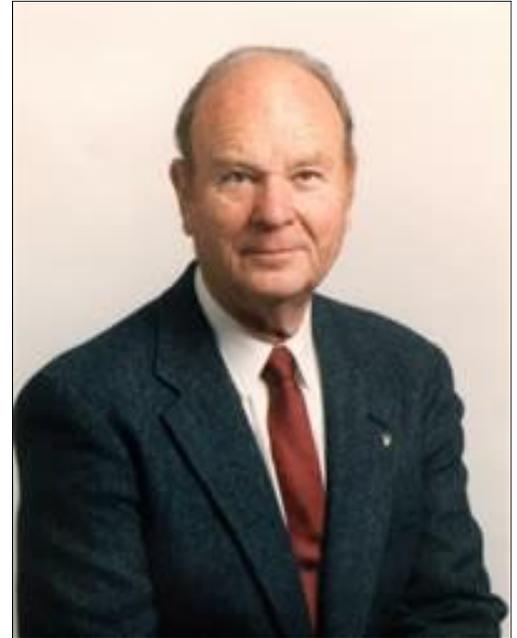
You should be able to prune quince, apple, and ume for shape now and place them into their show pot, if this is a practice you follow. Fertilize azaleas and most flowering and fruiting bonsai with a low nitrogen, high phosphorous fertilizer. A 0-10-10 should work well.

Repotting and potting (from nursery container to bonsai pot) can be safely done at this time for black pine and most

junipers. Repotting flowering and fruiting bonsai from bonsai pot to bonsai pot can be done, provided the root ball is not drastically disturbed and the tree is reasonably healthy.

Pay attention to watering schedules this month and next. Keeping plants too wet may promote root rot, especially if the tree is not actively growing. Watch for fungus, spider mites, and scale.

Remember to start choosing ... show trees for next spring [if you plan to exhibit in one of the area's shows such as the Descanso Bonsai Society's in June 2021]. Keep your eyes open for quality pots you may wish to use for these trees.



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, Ben Conway was scheduled to do the niche display at our canceled September meeting, so he provided photos for this, the October issue (see page 5). 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 and 2021 calendars and let us know when you would like to present your display.

—Marj Branson

2020 & 2021 Niche Displays	
Oct.	David Whiteside
Nov.	David Williams
Dec.	Volunteer Needed
Jan.	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 October, 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

Well Organized Demos Pay Dividends

By Ken Martin

YouTube Video Reviews

I have been aiming my reviews of free online demos to the “how to” for smaller, less expensive trees. It seems to me there is a sharp division between this category and the demos with super refined, super expensive, big trees, and there isn’t much in between.

Both of this month’s reviewed videos are on YouTube.

**Jason Chan,
Eastern Leaf Bonsai Nursery
14minutes
September 28, 2020
“How to Make a Twin Trunk
Bonsai Tree for Beginners”**

I like this brand-new demo from Chino, California-based Eastern Leaf owner Jason Chan for a couple of reasons:

- First, he shows how to design a nice looking bonsai out of an unusual juniper that had been languishing on his bench.
- Second, he concentrates on the styling first then adds voice-over later explaining why he performs each step.

I think this results in a more meaningful demonstration.



Screen captures by Ken Martin

**Bjorn BJORHOLM
Bonsai-U, Eisei en
Bonsai Garden
38 minutes
“Field-Grown Japanese
Black Pine ”**

I’ve said in previous reviews that Bjorn BJORHOLM from Eisei en Bonsai Garden in Nashville, Tennessee, is one of my favorite bonsai artists to watch on YouTube. Here he talks about styling a Japanese black pine. Some takeaways:

- He styles a very large jin and tears the woods off the jin rather than using a power tool such as a Dremel because he feels it creates a more natural look.
- Also to make the deadwood look more natural, he leaves bark part way up the jin and then torches the jin.
- Bjorn also discusses candle and needle removal and fertilizer options for branch growth versus needle length.

I like black pines and he’s given me a lot to think about in this 38-minute demo. 🌲



A Garden Juniper's Bonsai Progression

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

This is my first tree, a garden juniper (*Juniperus procumbens* 'Nana') that I have been training for three years. This material was purchased from a nearby garden nursery (Elegant Gardens Nursery, Inc.) in September of 2017. Being a beginner, I repotted and attempted to wire the tree. I was a little rough with it, and the top of the tree ended up dying off. But the bottom portion exploded with growth.

Early in the spring of 2018, I decided to cut back the branches to the first nodes since it was pretty healthy looking. Then I let it grow without any other major work for about two years. All I did during this time was mainly just pruning for silhouette and some minor wiring.

This year I repositioned the trunk angle slightly and moved the tree into a more rectangular shape pot. The tree is starting to look pretty decent now, and I hope to carve up some deadwood features in the trunk this winter.

—Ben Conway



Ben Conway's procumbens 'Nana' in 2017 (left).

The same procumbens 'Nana' with coffee mug accessory about a year later, in 2018 (right).

Now looking 'pretty decent,' as Ben puts it, along with accent plant and on a bonsai stand in a formal niche display arrangement this year (below).



Photos by Ben Conway

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

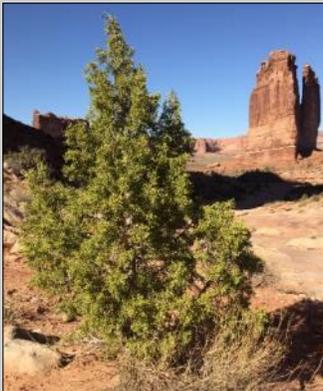
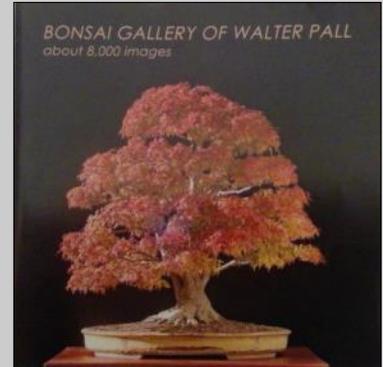
The Bonsai Gallery of Walter Pall, about 8,000 images, Walter Pall.

I enjoy the CVBS Library collection because it provides information, ideas, and inspiration (Ix3). Our next Book of the Month focuses on the latter (inspiration). *The Bonsai Gallery of Walter Pall, about 8,000 images* is a DVD. The CVBS copy is signed by Mr. Pall, who lives in Germany and is considered one of the foremost bonsai artists in the world. His DVD introduction, however, states that he considers himself “an amateur who tries to work professionally.” A review of his gallery quickly reveals his work is exceptional. He is especially well known for his naturalistic style, which often deviates from traditional bonsai practices.

You can check out the DVD yourself by contacting the CVBS librarian, or you can see Pall's latest pictures via his website. This site also includes “Walter's Blogs,” documenting his worldwide travels in the name of bonsai. See <http://walter-pall.de/>.

I selected this DVD as this month's BOM because I wanted something small that I could take on a road trip. My wife and I visited family in Wisconsin and then drove back to California recently. We made fast time between Wisconsin and Colorado, but slowed down in Utah to spend a few days at Arches and Zion National Parks. While hiking the parks, especially Arches, I found more inspiration for Bonsai. Arches had thousands of Utah junipers (*Juniperus osteosperma*), some youngsters reaching for the sky, many old timers continuing their battle against a harsh climate, and ancient trunks that finally succumbed but left a twisted legacy for me to admire. A few of my favorites are below.

—Mike Blumenberg



A young Utah juniper reaching for the sky in Arches NP (above).

A pine on the Observation Point overlooking Zion valley (right).

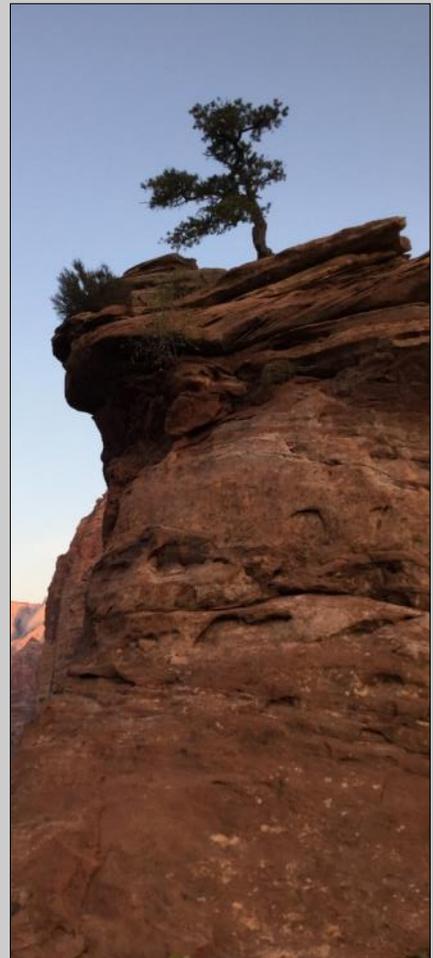
A twisted branch from an expired Utah juniper in Arches NP (below).



Old Utah junipers in Arches NP (below left and right).



Photos by Mike Blumenberg



Our 2020 Bonsai Exhibition Goes Virtual

Sometimes, you just have to make lemonade. In this case, the lemon is the Covid-19 pandemic, which forced the closure of our traditional venue for the Conejo Valley Bonsai Society's annual Bonsai Exhibition in the Gardens of the World's Resource Center in Thousand Oaks. The lemonade: a dozen CVBS members who contributed photographs of their own show-ready bonsai.

On this and the following nine pages, you may feast your eyes on the refreshing result—a virtual exhibition of over two dozen excellent bonsai plus several lovely suiseki (viewing stones). Each tree was photographed by its owner in whatever makeshift “studio” they could create at home. Their instructions were to keep it simple using only what each member had on hand. So, you will see some bonsai in complete displays with show stand and companion plant—but most are presented in a more minimalist manner. No companion plant and, in some cases, no show stand. Many thanks to our volunteers for their extraordinary efforts.

—David Whiteside



Burt Davy's fig (*Ficus Burt Davy*)
Ken Fuentes (left)



Japanese boxwood
(*Buxus microphylla* var. *japonica*)
Ken Martin (right)



Bougainvillea (*Bougainvillea*)
David Whiteside (left)

Cork bark elm (*Ulmus parvifolia* 'Cork Bark')
Ann Lofquist (below)



Garden juniper (*Juniperus procumbens* 'Nana')
Nancy Smeets (above)

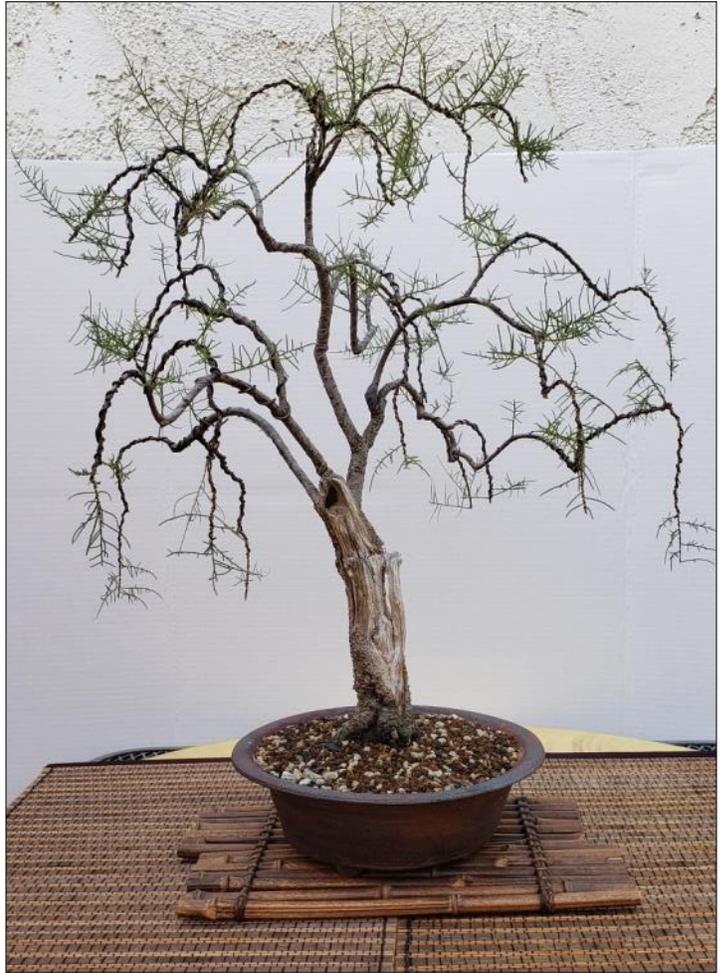
Catlin elm (*Ulmus parvifolia* 'Catlin')
Ben Conway
(left in photo, right)

Garden juniper
(*Juniperus procumbens* 'Nana')
Ben Conway
(right in photo, right)



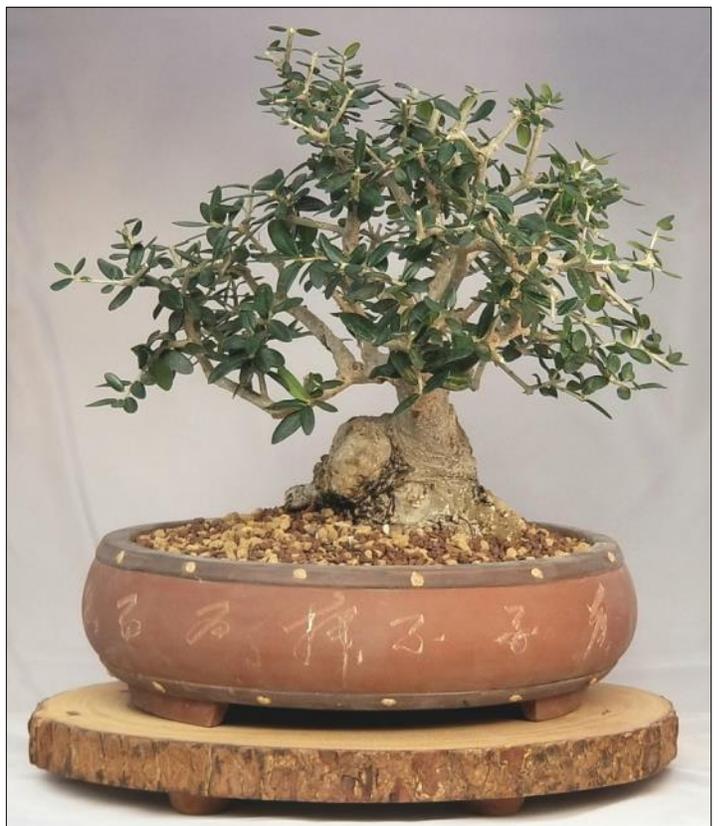
Chinese elm
(*Ulmus parvifolia*)
Larry Kimmelman (left)

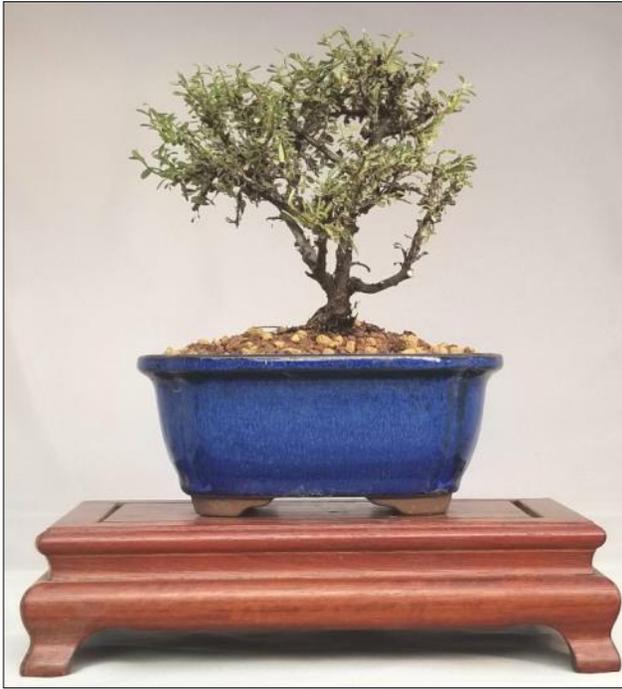
Saltcedar, tamarisk (*Tamarix*)
Richard Winston (right)



Shimpaku juniper (tanuki style)
(*Juniperus chinensis* 'Shimpaku')
Ann Lofquist (above)

Olive (*Olea europaea*)
David Williams (right)





Cotoneaster (*Contoneaster*)
David Williams (above)



Burt Davy's fig (*Ficus Burt Davyi*)
Ken Fuentes (right)



Siberian elm
(*Ulmus pumila*)
Ken Martin (right)

**Elephant bush
(*Portulacaria afra*)
Richard Winston (right)**



**Olive (*Olea europaea*)
Marj Branson (above)**

**Rosemary (*Rosmarinus*)
Mike Blumenberg (right)**



Shimpaku juniper
(Juniperus chinensis 'Shimpaku')
Rick Naber (right)



Dwarf Japanese garden juniper
(Juniperus procumbens 'Nana')
Ken Martin (below)



Bougainvillea
(*Bougainvillea*)
Nancy Smeets (right)



Japanese garden juniper
(*Juniperus procumbens* 'Nana')
Richard Winston (above)

Boxwood (*Buxus microphylla*)
Larry Kimmelman (right)



Shimpaku juniper
(Juniperus chinensis 'Shimpaku')
Nancy Smeets (right)



Oriental sweetgum
(Liquidambar orientalis)
David Whiteside (right)





Cork oak (*Quercus suber*)
Mike Blumenberg (left)



Viewing stones (*Suiseki*)
Nancy Smeets (above)

Ginkgo (*Ginkgo biloba*)
Marj Branson (right)



ALL KNOWN BONSAI SHOWS, EXHIBITIONS, AND EVENTS IN CALIFORNIA HAVE BEEN CANCELED FOR THE REMAINDER OF 2020. IF YOU WISH TO VISIT A BONSAI GARDEN, CONFIRM STATUS OF THE GARDEN AHEAD OF TIME.

President's Message (Continued from page 1)

activities for 2021. We plan to maintain our monthly newsletter, but what else can we do? As club members, what additional activities would you like the club to embark on?

- Should we try to tentatively schedule demonstrations by professionals—and then cancel them or attempt to do them virtually (as some other clubs are doing) if our meeting venue remains closed?
- Would you like to see virtual demonstrations by our experienced members?
- How about virtual workshops of small groups of club members?

Of course, any of these “virtual” options require technology such as Skype, YouTube, Apple’s FaceTime, or Zoom. FaceTime only works between Apple devices, so that limits its usefulness, but Zoom, Skype, and YouTube work on any platform. The easiest of this may be the relative newcomer, Zoom.

Does anyone have a Zoom account and know how to host a Zoom demonstration, club meeting, or small Zoom gathering?

To close out 2020, we will have the election of officers: presi-

dent, vice president, treasurer, and secretary. This month we will establish a nominations committee; the vote will be in November. Once elected, the officers will appoint the eight standing committee chairs: advisor, membership, newsletter, programs, publicity, refreshments, librarian, and field trips and activities. We need volunteers to fill all these positions.

Please contact me to let us know what position you can help with.

Our October Bonsai Exhibition

Even though the Resource Center at the Gardens of the World in Thousand Oaks is closed to an in-person exhibition this fall, we are holding a Virtual Exhibition in this newsletter (see pages 7 – 16). Many thanks to our fellow members who have taken pictures of their show trees and sent them to our newsletter editor, David Whiteside, for this “event.”

I hope you and your families are all doing well. I know some of you are staying close to home, others are working, and all seem to have a very limited social life with friends or bonsai activities.

Stay safe and keep in touch. 🌳

Bonsai Guidelines (Continued from page 1)

the photo, below).

Two weeks later, a new branch (marked with a yellow dot) started lower to the right. I made sure it was getting good light. It’s getting stronger, and it will become the main sacrificial branch until something breaks lower.

I uncovered more of the trunk, and I’m hoping to get a bud to break very low (at the red dots preferably) to add width to the

trunk. I will keep removing any new growth from the current sacrificial branches (blue dot), and I will keep the bonsai well fertilized to encourage new shoots at the soil line.

While in this process, keep the entire bonsai trimmed so that all available energy will be focused on breaking lower branches. 🌳

Sacrificial branches are being used to thicken the lower trunk of this *Ficus Burt Davyi* (photo at left). Note the branch on the lower, left side of the trunk that is marked with a blue dot. This is the current primary sacrificial branch.

Lower on the trunk on the right side there is a new sacrificial branch (marked with a yellow dot).

Still lower on both sides of the trunk is where new sacrificial branches are hoped for (red dots).



Photo by Ken Fuentes