



conejo valley

BONSAI society

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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

President's Message

New: Virtual Mini Workshops

By Marj Branson

A very Happy Holiday and New Year to all with a special best wishes for a much better 2021! With the Covid-19 shut-down, hopefully we can all spend quality time with our households.

We have some exciting new programs for 2021: virtual workshops and consultancies with our club advisor. Club Editor David Whiteside is looking at how to organize mini workshops via Zoom or other meeting platforms such as FaceTime or Skype.

These mini workshops will be groups of members coming together virtually to discuss trees they are working with. Each group will be small—probably just two to four members—so everyone has time to discuss their tree. In addition, CVBS Advisor Ken Fuentes has agreed to offer one-on-one virtual consultations. Please give this some thought and let David Whiteside know your thoughts and whether you are interested in participating.

Note that participation requires internet access and a phone, tablet, laptop, or computer with a webcam and microphone. Most smartphones, many tablets and laptops, and some computers have built-in cameras. Inexpensive external webcams are available at many consumer electronics stores.

Elections

In November, we finalized our election of officers. The officers from 2020 agreed to serve for 2021. Ditto for the committee chairs. Thank you fellow board and committee members for staying on for another year. Our officers and committee chairs for 2021 will be:

Officers:

- President: Marj Branson
- Vice President: Mike Blumenberg
- Treasurer: Ken Fuentes
- Secretary: Ken Martin

Committee Chairs:

- Advisor: Ken Fuentes
- Membership: Nancy Smeets
- Newsletter Editor: David Whiteside
- Program: Nancy Smeets



Marj Branson

Virtual mini workshops require internet access and a phone, tablet, laptop, or computer with webcam and a microphone. Many devices have built-in cameras and microphones—and inexpensive webcams are available in most consumer electronics stores.

(Continued on page 6)

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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 SEE OCTOBER 2020 ISSUE FOR 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 |

Caution: Bonsai Don't Take a Holiday

By Jim Barrett

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

One of our concerns, when considering the weather this time of year, is keeping our bonsai properly watered. With the rains, cool weather, and the plants entering a slow growth or dormant period, one is lulled into thinking it is not necessary to worry about watering. On the contrary, we must be extra careful that our bonsai do not dry out completely.

Some of our driest days occur during the winter and, coupled with winds, plants may dry out too much and not show the effects until next spring.

To be sure, some bonsai seem to never dry out enough to require water, but this is not true of all trees, especially those in shallow or very small containers.

Check your trees every day or so, and water only those trees whose soil appears to be dry. The finger-in-the-soil test is the best moisture gauge. If plants are receiving too much water (rain), try tipping the pot about 20 degrees and support this position with an appropriate block or wedge. Water will drain to the low end and run out of the drain holes. This procedure is used in Japan during the rainy season with great success.

Check the thickness of moss; if it seems to be quite thick, remove it. Too-thick moss does not allow the soil to "breathe" properly and may harbor pests. You should also remove any moss creeping up the trunk. A stiff brush is a useful tool for this procedure.

Remember to remove fallen leaves and debris from benches and soil surfaces. Remove any remaining leaves from deciduous trees except hornbeam. It won't hurt to remove hornbeam

leaves, but since they remain on the tree after they turn brown, you may want to enjoy them.

If you do have deciduous trees, now through January is the best time to prune or remove heavy, unsightly top branches that have grown unnoticed during the year. Thin out or redirect primary branch terminal twigs. Cutting back to a secondary branch quite often is necessary to create new terminals that enhance the tree's design. Most maple secondary and tertiary branches are flexible at this time of year and can be wired and moved to fill or open a space.

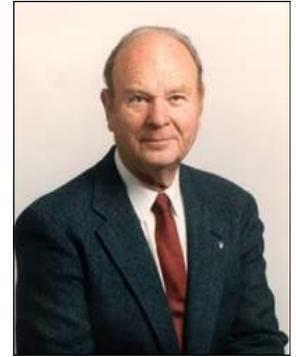
Use this time to fine tune your deciduous trees.

A side benefit of winter pruning is it creates the opportunity to make old wood cuttings. Many times old branches must be removed. Rather than throwing them away, try sticking them [in soil] as you would any cutting. If they grow, you have the makings of a good shohin material that may be several years old already.

Don't forget to pull or trim old needles on black pines. Trim junipers to maintain their shape. Use dormant spray on all deciduous trees, Volck oil on evergreen and deciduous trees.

Repotting Japanese black pines and all junipers may be done next month. January and February are also great times for potting from nursery container to bonsai pot. I mention the January/February reminder to get you thinking about soil components, pots, and other supplies you should have ready before the time comes.

Have a great holiday season. 🌲



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, David Williams was scheduled to do the niche display at our canceled November meeting, so he provided a photo for this, the December issue (see page 8). 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 2021 calendar and let us know when you would like to present your display.

—Marj Branson

| 2020—2021 Niche Displays | |
|--------------------------|-------------------------|
| Dec. | Ken Martin |
| Jan. | Mike Blumenberg |
| Feb. | Volunteer Needed |
| March | 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 December, 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

Potting and Pruning a Large Boxwood

By Ken Fuentes

[Editor's Note: CVBS Advisor Ken Fuentes is available to answer bonsai questions for club members. Just email your questions to Ken at advisor@cvbs-bonsai.org. This month, he answers a question submitted by club member Ken Martin.]

Ken Martin asked if I could help him decide what type of pot would be the best for a 21-inch-tall boxwood.

Ken Martin wrote: "I have a decision to make regarding a pot for a 21-inch tall, three-trunk boxwood. The tree had been sitting in a 10-gallon can at a nursery in Somis for about 10 years when I bought it in 2016. I initially styled it, and last year I cut two-thirds off the roots and put it in a smaller can. I think now it is close to being ready to be put in a bonsai pot.

"I have three pots that could work. An unglazed oval, an unglazed rectangular, and a blue glazed round pot. After looking at the photos, all the pots look a little large and deep for the tree. The current root mass is 5 1/2 inches deep. The pots I have are all 3 3/4 inches from rim to bottom of pot, so I'm not sure I would want to use a shallower pot at this time.

"I would appreciate knowing what you think and the reasoning behind your ideas. Might another pot be a better choice for this tree? How would you place the tree in an oval or rectangular pot?"

I advised Ken M. the following: I assume that you have chosen pots that would accommodate the current root ball. Because this is the first move from a nursery container to a bonsai pot, and since the bonsai needs further development, a deeper pot in this case would be an option. You might want to put the tree in one of your deeper pots for a couple of years to get some faster growth, then go to a smaller, shallower pot.

Ken M. responded: "The nebari is 5 1/2 inches above the bottom of the pot in the current plastic container, so say if the nebari were to be placed one inch above the rim of the pot I would have to cut roughly another inch off the bottom of the root ball."

Based on that, I suggested: If you are willing to reduce the root ball, I envision a shallower rectangular or oval un-glazed pot with straight sides and no lip. The boxwood has beautiful broad leaf foliage, but the texture of the trunk is very masculine so a glazed pot could be used to highlight the foliage, but you would have to buy a custom pot as described above because the stand-

ard glazed pot will usually have fancy legs and lips. Lips tend to soften the look and I like the more aggressive feel. The choice between the rectangular or oval pot is a personal preference.

Placement of the bonsai would be to the left of the center line and a little toward the back of the center line. The reason for this placement is because the first branch, which is on the right trunk, will develop and become thicker, longer and more dominate.

Once the root ball is reduced, you can sample both pots and that should make it easier to decide on the right look and feel.

I redlined the branches that I would remove (see photos, page 5). The shorter trunk on the left should not compete with the right trunk, and its apex should be shorter and should not cross in front of the right trunk. On the shorter left trunk apex, I redlined both branches (see numbers 1 and 2 in the photo on page 5) because they are too heavy/thick in the apex. Once removed, you will need to let the apex grow out and become more developed, and it should be shorter in height than the right trunk but light in branch thickness. I redlined the low branch on the left trunk (number 5 in the photo on page 5) because of the (side view) pigeon breasted bend. The remaining proposed cuts on the right trunk (numbers 3 and 4) are to eliminate crossing branches and open the canopy. On multi-trunked bonsai, the lowest branch can be on either trunk. 🌳



Ken Fuentes



Ken Martin's boxwood in the three pots he was considering: round (left), oval (middle), and rectangular (right).



Photos by Ken Martin. Enhancements by Ken Fuentes and Damon DuBois



These are the prunes that Ken Fuentes suggested for Ken Martin's boxwood (top left).

Here's how the boxwood would look after Ken F.'s suggested pruning cuts (top right).

The red line marks how the canopy might fill out when allowed to grow back after the pruning (above).

How Ken Martin's boxwood would appear after it has filled out its canopy, as Advisor Ken Fuentes proposes (right).



President's Message
(Continued from page 1)

- Publicity: Guy & Deborah Ervin
- Refreshments: Mike Blumenberg
- Librarian: Mike Blumenberg
- Field Trips & Activities: Damon DuBois

Our new committee chair—Damon DuBois—will look at club activities on two levels: both actual and virtual. Actual activities depend on Covid-19 developments, but meanwhile Damon will work on new virtual programs. For example, he will be a liaison for the virtual mini workshops with newsletter editor David Whiteside and on the club's Facebook page with Nancy Smeets, who handles the page. Damon also will see what can be done to update our club's web page. Our face to the public is through these mediums, and Damon's experience in these fields will be a great contribution.

When we can get back to normal and have meetings or shows is still an unknown factor. If we get any updates from other clubs or the Westlake Village Community Center, I will pass it on.

Dues and Pottery Sale

Our club membership dues for next year will be coming due in January 2021. Due to the Covid-19 pandemic and the absence of in-person club meetings, we have not pursued members who are delinquent on their 2020 dues. Now, we are asking all members to come up-to-date and pay dues for 2021. Although we have not held in-person demonstrations, we have had one private demonstration which we paid for this year (see story, next issue). And we are required to maintain our club's insurance policy, which is our single largest annual club expense. So, we need your dues. Nancy Smeets will be notifying those with outstanding 2020 dues so they can get up to date.

Our only other source of income is the annual Holiday Potluck, Raffle & Auction, which normally is our December club meeting. Because that event has been canceled, we have substituted a quasi-virtual bonsai pottery sale. We are offering pots from a donation of a large collection. Please see the photo of the pots above and the list of what's available on page 10. If you see anything you can use, please contact me so we can arrange a private showing and sale. As you can see from the updated inventory list, a good number of pots already have been sold, so act now to have the best selection available.

Please see our Virtual Niche Display Program for 2021 on page 3. Already, we need volunteers for February, March, April, and beyond. Please let me know if you can do one of those months.

Stay safe, keep in touch, and Happy Holidays. 🌸

In lieu of the Conejo Valley Bonsai Society's traditional annual fundraiser, the Holiday Potluck, Raffle & Auction, the club is offering pots for sale (below). These bonsai and garden pots were donated to the club and are now available—the complete list of the inventory is on page 10. Participating in the sale is simple. Just select pots that interest you from the list, contact club President Marj Branson, arrange a private showing (masks required) in her garage, negotiate a price, and voila, you have a new pot for your bonsai or garden. There also are various sizes of glazed and unglazed trays on sale. Don't wait—act now and get the best selection!



English Expert on Wiring and Styling

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.

This month I’ve chosen two of Graham Potter’s demonstrations to review. Both are on YouTube and, I feel, are well worth watching.

Graham Potter, Kaizen Bonsai nursery and school, England

12 minutes

“Wiring: How Not To for Dummies”

The wiring demonstration in this first video was fairly basic—but it always seems I learn a new trick no matter how basic the instructions are. Here I learned how to make the tips of a conifer point up. Something I’ve always struggled with. There was some music in both these videos, which is a bit unusual and I found a little distracting. About 2 seconds of audio were missing at about the 11-minute mark. All-in-all, I found it worth watching. He has a lot of free demo videos available at his site.



Graham Potter, Kaizen Bonsai nursery and school, England

10 minutes

“Styling a Yamadori Scotts Pine”

Again, this short video contained some wiring instruction but what I found interesting was the technique he used to make a twin trunk tree more pleasant to view by some use of back branch placement and some new shari (deadwood scars on trunk) on the fairly straight right trunk so it will attract more attention. The photo here is the before. You’ll have to go to YouTube to see the tree after his work. 🌲



Olive Bonsai Won in CVBS Holiday Raffle

Editor's Note: David Williams was scheduled to provide the niche display at the Conejo Valley Bonsai Society's November 2020 meeting, which was canceled due to the Covid-19 pandemic. So David set up a display at his home and photographed it himself, in his usual professional-quality fashion. Here are some details about this olive bonsai, which he won in the club's December 19, 2019 Holiday Raffle.

I won this olive (*Olea europaea*) in last year's Holiday Potluck, Raffle & Auction. It was donated to the club by a demonstrator, Jason Chan, owner of Eastern Leaf Bonsai. Originally, the tree was in a training pot. I repotted it into the bonsai pot shown in the photograph (below). The good news is that it is still alive!

As far as what I see in this bonsai's future, I just want to continue to work on the pads and branching to make it look older. Overall, I like it small, but I think it would look great larger as I tend to it.

It seems I do better with olives than many other species that I have had for years. Last year's fire was in my backyard and I lost a bunch of trees, but a few favorites survived. This one is the best.

—David Williams

This olive (*Olea europaea*) originated as a raffle prize at the CVBS Holiday Potluck party last year. At the time, it was in a training pot and David Williams later moved it into this lovely bonsai pot (below). Happily, it survived 2019's fires.



Photo by David Williams

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

Bonsai Today Masters' Series: Junipers compiled and edited by Wayne Schoech & the staff of *Bonsai Today*.

My juniper needs some trimming. I want to open some space between branches (see the picture bottom left) and create more ramification. This would have been a perfect project for a future CVBS workshop ("Bring your trees!"), but that won't happen anytime soon. So, I turned once again to the CVBS library for some guidance.

This month's Book of the Month is a repeat, but the *Bonsai Today Masters' Series: Junipers* is just what I was looking for. In the book's Foreword, Colin Lewis writes that this book "brings together, for the first time, wisdom and experience gathered from around the globe in one comprehensive reference work. Here you can learn from the masters, from generations of experience."

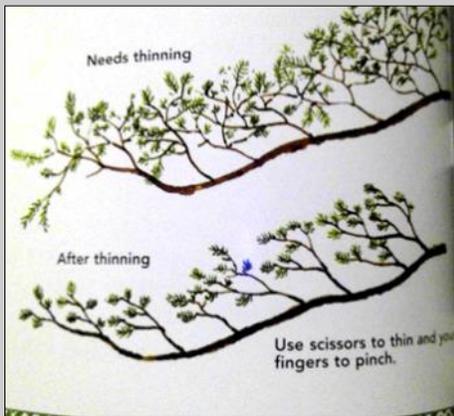
I turned to two chapters for guidance. The first was "Juniper Care, Maintenance, & Other Basics," which includes a discussion of pinching and pruning. I also read a chapter titled "Ramification, Refining Your Bonsai." This latter chapter defined ramification as the "divergence of the trunk and limbs of plants into increasingly smaller branches. This is a very important concept if you want to understand bonsai. Fine ramification makes for refined bonsai and helps create a natural and aged look."

I also read that "there are two important concepts directly related to ramification. One is taper. In bonsai, taper is critical. Good taper means the trunk and each branch is widest at its base and narrowest at its tip, with a somewhat even narrowing as you move from the base to the tip. ... The other important concept in understanding ramification is internode lengths. Internodes are the sections of trunks, branches and shoots that are between the nodes. Nodes are where leaf buds occur. Leaf buds become new shoots and eventually branches. The shorter the internodes on a bonsai, the finer the ramification. Some ways to shorten internodes are pinching, pruning and regulating growth." This chapter's guidance is supported with a combination of graphics, as shown below, and photographs of specific branches.

My tree remains a work in progress, but I'll continue to pinch, prune, and regulate its growth to improve its ramification.

Please contact me if you are interested in this book or any other book in the CVBS Library. The mobile bonsai bookmobile remains open for business.

—Mike Blumenberg



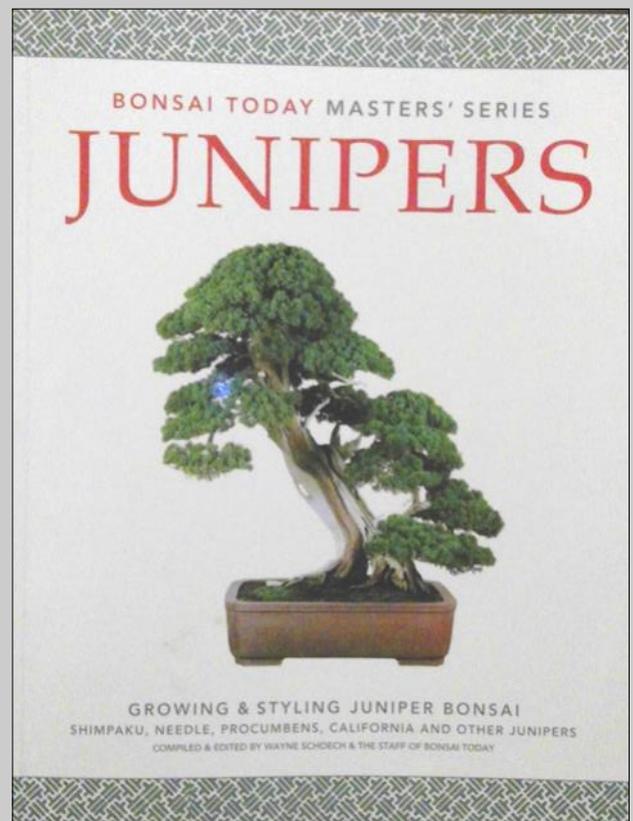
The *Masters' Series: Junipers* (right) is a production of the now out of print magazine, *Bonsai Today*.

A detail of one of the book's illustrations (left) shows a branch before (top) and after thinning.

Mike Blumenberg's juniper (left).



Photos by Mike Blumenberg



2020

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.

CVBS Fundraiser: Bonsai Pots for Sale

| Color | Type | Sides | Size (L/W/D) | Quantity | |
|--------------------------------|------------------------|---------------------|-------------------------------|--------------|-----------------|
| Blue Glaze | Oval | Rounded | 10 x 7 1/2 x 1 1/2 | 1 | |
| Blue Glaze | Oval | Rounded | 11 1/2 x 9 x 1 1/2 | 1 | |
| Blue Glaze | Oval | Rounded | 12 1/2 x 9 x 1 1/2 | 1 | |
| Blue Glaze | Oval | Straight | 7 x 4 x 1 1/2 | 1 | Gone |
| Blue Glaze | Oval | Straight | 12 x 8 1/2 x 1 1/2 | 1 | Gone |
| Brown | Rectangular | Straight | 12 1/4 x 9 1/2 x 2 1/2 | 4 | |
| Brown | Rectangular | Straight | 18 x 14 x 4 1/2 | 2 | |
| Light Brownish Gray | Rectangular | Straight | 21 x 15 x 5 | 1 | Gone |
| Brown | Rectangular | Straight | 24 x 18 x 5 1/2 | 1 | Gone |
| Brown | Rectangular | Straight | 12 1/2 x 7 3/4 x 1 1/2 | 1 | |
| Blue Glaze | Rectangular | Straight | 14 1/2 x 9 1/2 x 2 | 1 | |
| Blue Glaze | Rectangular | Straight | 8 x 5 x 2 | 3 | |
| Blue Glaze | Rectangular | Straight | 8 3/4 x 6 x 2 | 1 | |
| Blue Glaze | Rectangular | Straight | 4 3/4 x 3 x 1 1/2 | 2 | |
| Blue Glaze | Rectangular | Straight | 4 1/2 x 6 x 2 | 2 | |
| Blue Glaze | Rectangular | Straight | 7 x 5 1/2 x 2 1/4 | 1 | |
| Blue Glaze | Rectangular | Straight | 8 x 5 3/4 x 1 1/2 | 1 | |
| Blue/green | Rectangular | Straight | 12 1/2 x 9 / 2 1/4 | 1 | |
| Light Blue | Rectangular | Straight | 12 x 8 1/2 x 2 1/2 | 1 | |
| Brown | Rectangular | Straight | 8 1/2 x 5 3/4 x 2 | 6 | 4 |
| Brown | Rectangular | Straight | 8 x 6 x 1 1/2 | 2 | |
| Brown | Rectangular | Straight | 7 3/4 x 5 x 2 | 2 | |
| Brown | Rectangular | Straight | 5 1/2 x 4 x 1 1/2 | 1 | |
| Brown | Rectangular | Straight | 9 1/2 x 6 1/2 x 2 | 3 | |
| Brown | Rectangular | Straight | 19 1/2 x 15 x 5 | 1 | |
| Brown | Rectangular | Straight | 22 x 16 x 5 | 1 | |
| Mustard | Rectangular | Straight | 6 1/2 x 4 1/2 x 1 1/2 | 1 | |
| Blue | Rectangular | Straight | 6 x 4 1/4 x 1 1/2 | 1 | |
| Brown | Round | Straight | 12 x 7 high | 1 | |
| Garden Pots | | | | | |
| Black Glaze | 10 sided | | 8 inch | 1 | |
| Cream Glaze | 10 sided | | 8 inch | 1 | Gone |
| Cream Glaze | 10 sided | | 6 inch | 1 | Gone |
| Chinese Print | Round | | 12 inch | 2 | |
| Chinese Print | Round | | 10 1/2 Inch | 1 | |
| Variety of Glazed saucers | | | | | |
| Variety of Brown Clay saucers | | | | | |