



conejo valley

BONSAI society

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A member of the Golden State Bonsai Federation 

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President's Message

Celebrate Holidays with CVBS Gifts

By Marj Branson

Are you still shopping for holiday gifts? No matter which holidays you celebrate, if you give gifts the Conejo Valley Bonsai Society may be able to help!

Your club has two items that would make wonderful gifts for the bonsai lover in your family—or for yourself. The first is a large (11 x 14 inch) full-color, bonsai wall calendar for 2022. It features large prints of members' bonsai selected from this year's CVBS Annual Exhibition (Virtual), which appeared in the November issue of this newsletter. These wall calendars are available for \$40 each, which covers costs plus a small donation to the club's coffers.

The second is a new item: a CVBS coffee mug. These 11-oz., white mugs feature CVBS's official logo on one side. Also priced to cover production

costs plus a donation to CVBS, these handsome mugs cost only \$10 each.

We have limited supplies of both items, so don't wait. Call, text, or email me now to reserve your CVBS calendar and/or coffee mug. See photos this page.

Meanwhile, we are still waiting for final word from The Westlake Village Community Center whether we can hold our January meeting in person at the Center. Any day now I should get some information. I will let everyone know by a separate email. We are hopeful, so reserve the evening of January 20, 2022,

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Marj Branson



A few large CVBS 2022 calendars (left and left below) are available for \$40 apiece.

There's also a limited supply of 11-oz. CVBS logo mugs (below) for \$10 each.



Conejo Valley Bonsai Society Meetings

(When Covid-19 restrictions are lifted)

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

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www.facebook.com/conejovalleybonsaisociety

Contact Us

(Click on Email Address)

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CVBS Programs 2021

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

January 21	CANCELED DUE TO CORONAVIRUS 7:30 PM: Brief Meeting followed by Workshop—BRING YOUR TREES
February 18	CANCELED DUE TO CORONAVIRUS 7:30 PM: Brief Meeting followed by DEMONSTRATION: TBA
March 18	CANCELED DUE TO CORONAVIRUS 7:30 PM: Brief Meeting followed by Workshop—BRING YOUR TREES
April 15	NOTE SPECIAL TIME AND “PLACE”: ZOOM 7:00 PM: Online via Zoom (members in good standing will be emailed the Zoom link prior to the meeting) DEMONSTRATION: Sergio Cuan / Deciduous Trees
May 20	CANCELED DUE TO CORONAVIRUS 7:30 PM: Brief Meeting followed by Workshop—BRING YOUR TREES
NOTE DATE June 8	NOTE SPECIAL TIME AND “PLACE”: ZOOM 7:30 PM: Joint Zoom event with Bonsai Club of Santa Barbara DEMONSTRATION: Jonas Dupuich / Japanese Black Pine Development and Refinement
NOTE DATE July 8	NOTE SPECIAL DATE AND “PLACE”: ZOOM 7:00 PM: Online via Zoom (members in good standing will be emailed the Zoom link prior to the meeting) DEMONSTRATION: Todd Schlafer / Styling and Detail Work of Collected Juniper
August 19	CANCELED DUE TO CORONAVIRUS 7:30 PM: Brief Meeting followed by Workshop and Swap Meet— BRING YOUR TREES AND OTHER ITEMS
September 16	CANCELED DUE TO CORONAVIRUS 7:30 PM: Brief Meeting followed by PEER CRITIQUES—BRING YOUR EXHIBITION TREES
October 2–3	CANCELED DUE TO VENUE LIMITATIONS 18TH ANNUAL CVBS EXHIBITION
October 21	CANCELED DUE TO CORONAVIRUS 7:30PM: Brief Meeting followed by Workshop—BRING YOUR TREES
November 18	CANCELED DUE TO CORONAVIRUS 7:30 PM: Brief Meeting with Club Elections followed by DEMONSTRATION: TBA
December 16	CANCELED DUE TO CORONAVIRUS 7:30 PM HOLIDAY POTLUCK, RAFFLE & AUCTION

Don't Ignore Your Bonsai During the Holidays

By Jim Barrett

Editor's Note: While the Conejo Valley Bonsai Society's monthly meetings remain 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

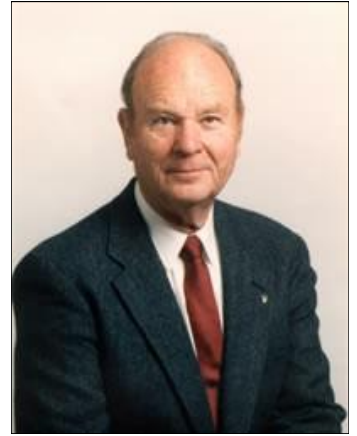
also remove any moss creeping up the trunk. A stiff brush is a useful tool for this procedure.

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 op-



Jim Barrett

(Continued on page 8)

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 until at least January 2022 due to 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 (cvbs.editor@earthlink.net).

Please note that we list the month of the newsletter issue for each Virtual Niche Volunteer (right). For this, the December 2021 issue, Ken Fuentes provided the virtual niche display. 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 2022 calendar and let us know when you would like to present your display.

—Marj Branson

2021 - '22 Niche Displays

(Month of publication)

Dec.	Ken Fuentes
Jan 2022	Antonio Viscarra
Feb.	Volunteer Needed
March	Volunteer Needed

CVBS Membership

Interested in CVBS?

The Conejo Valley Bonsai Society is open to anyone interested in the horticultural art of bonsai. If you are not a member, consider joining now. Once Covid-19 restrictions are lifted, we will resume meeting at 7:30 PM on the third Thursday of every month in the Westlake Village City Hall Community Room (31200 Oakcrest Drive, Westlake Village, CA 91361). Please Note: during the pandemic, CVBS has cosponsored several demonstrations via Zoom; DVDs of those are available in our library. Membership includes 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

Treating Deadwood at Lake Merritt

By Mike Blumenberg

I had the opportunity to visit the Bonsai Garden Lake Merritt in Oakland, CA after Thanksgiving and wanted to share pictures of a few favorite trees. Whenever I get to the Bay Area, I look for an opportunity to visit this garden since it is a favorite destination. On this trip, I enjoyed studying many impressive bonsai and had the opportunity to meet Kathy Shaner, the Garden's curator. We discussed deadwood while admiring a beautiful California juniper (see the picture below).

Kathy explained that she rarely uses lime-sulfur to treat deadwood because she doesn't like the bleached color. In lieu of lime-sulfur, she explained how she uses wood stains to treat deadwood. The stain needs to rest for a long time so the pigment settles out then make one quick stir to bring just a hint of pigment into the mixture. This is what she uses to treat deadwood. I hadn't heard of this technique before but might try it on one of my trees soon. Below are a few of my favorite bonsai from my most recent visit. 🌳



California Juniper (top left)
(*Juniperus californica*)

Hawthorn (above)
(*Crataegus* sp.)

Trident Maple (left)
(*Acer buergerianum*)

Silverberry (below)
(*Elaeagnus pungens*)



Photos by Mike Blumenberg

European Olive Thrives after Major Reduction

Editor's Note: CVBS Advisor Ken Fuentes provided the virtual niche display for this, the December 2021 issue of our newsletter (see listing of virtual niche volunteers, page 3). Because physical meetings are on hold due to the pandemic at least until January 2022, Ken set the display up at his home and photographed it. Here are some details about Ken's European olive.

Three years ago, this European olive (*Olea europaea*) was in a box and was three times as big. I reduced it and continuously directionally pruned and removed bar branches. It currently has a 4-inch base, is 9 inches tall, and 14 inches wide. The Japanese container is 8 inches long, 3 inches deep. I don't know the olive's age, but I would guess 15 to 20 years.

—Ken Fuentes

Ken Fuentes' European olive (below) is approximately 15 to 20 years old. The impressive base is 4 inches wide. The bonsai is 9 inches tall from soil line to apex and has a 14-inch spread.



Photo by Ken Fuentes

The Ins and Outs of Junipers and Pines

By Ken Martin

Online Video Reviews

This month I return to two of my favorite bonsai experts, Jason Chan and Bjorn BJORHOLM. Jason covers some basic considerations when picking a juniper for development as a bonsai while Bjorn demonstrates styling a large, old Scots pine.

Jason Chan
Eastern Leaf Bonsai
Bonsai Nursery Hunting—Starting from Scratch.
7 min.
YouTube address: Bonsai Nursery Hunting—Starting from Scratch

In this video, Eastern Leaf owner Jason Chan takes us through his nursery and critiques several not-yet-worked-on junipers. In the process, he lists the good and not-so-good features to look for when selecting a tree that has good bonsai potential. He selects a prostrata and a San Jose and asks the viewer to select the better tree and explain why. This video was made in October 2021, and he plans to have a follow up video on this subject in the near future. I assume you can go online and vote if you desire.



Jason Chan (above) commenting on junipers from his nursery, pointing out their strong points and weaknesses.

Bjorn BJORHOLM
Eisei-en Bonsai
Styling a Legacy Pine Bonsai
14 minutes
YouTube address: Momo the Bonsai Guard Dog, Plus Styling a Legacy Pine Bonsai

Another of my favorite bonsai demonstrators is Bjorn BJORHOLM, this time styling a Scots pine (*Pinus silvestris*) he bought from the well-known bonsai expert Bill Valavanis two years ago. Although we don't see many Scots pines around Southern California, many of Bjorn's tips regarding lower branches, techniques to make a bonsai look older, shaping the apex, and bringing some branches closer to the trunk are applicable to the species we work with around here. He also talks about using a minimal wiring technique. 🌲



Bjorn BJORHOLM with his Scots pine before styling (above, right).

The same Scots pine after Bjorn has styled it (below right).



Screen captures by Ken Martin

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 Art of Bonsai by Peter D. Adams (Publisher: Ward Lock Limited, London, 1981) 175 pages.

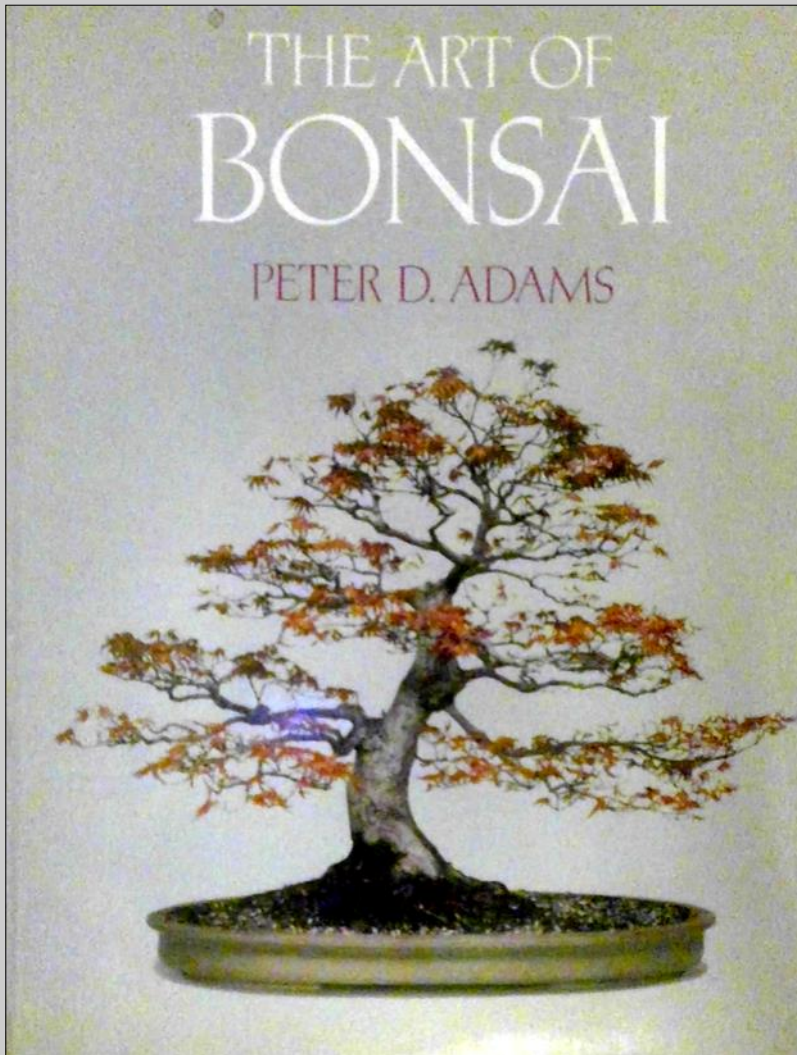
Our December Book of the Month is *The Art of Bonsai* by Peter D Adams. Adams is the author of several bonsai books, including *Bonsai Landscapes* and *The Art of Flowering Bonsai*. I selected this book and its chapter on the “Aesthetics of Bonsai” as a follow up to last month’s book on the principles of bonsai design.

This chapter discusses ageing, rhythm, and texture; it concludes with several examples of bonsai that evolve over time to improve their aesthetics.

The first part of the chapter, ageing, discusses various techniques such as jin that help create an illusion of age in bonsai. The discussion includes step-by-step illustrations on the jin method, transforming a living branch into deadwood that complements the bonsai’s design. The discussion of rhythm is short but emphasizes consistency in design through the trunk, branch structure, and foliage. The section on texture explains that rough trunk texture in species like a cork oak contributes to the illusion of age while a broom-style bonsai looks better with a trunk with smooth bark.

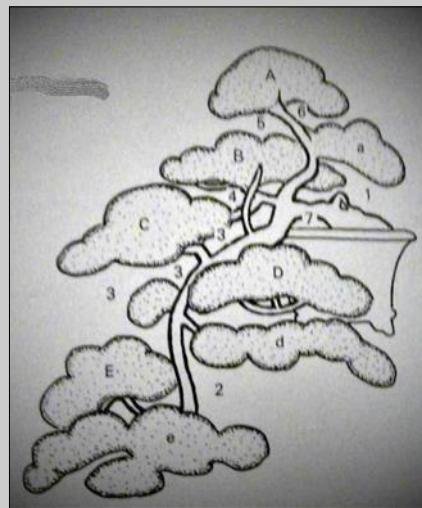
The “Aesthetics of Bonsai” chapter concludes with various examples of bonsai evolving in design. Each example is explained in text and accompanied by pictures or illustrations like the two shown below. This example is a photo of Chinese juniper trained in a cascade style and an illustration of what this bonsai could become. You can check out this book yourself through our mobile book mobile!

—Mike Blumenberg



A Chinese juniper trained in a full cascade style (left) in photo of how it presently appears.

An artist’s illustration (right) of how the same Chinese juniper could be developed and refined in the future.



Photos by Mike Blumenberg

AT PRESS TIME, SOME IN-PERSON BONSAI EVENTS IN CALIFORNIA WERE SCHEDULED DURING 2022 (see below). MANY GARDENS ARE OPEN—BUT YOU ARE ADVISED TO CONFIRM STATUS OF THE GARDEN AHEAD OF TIME. WE ALSO WILL CONTINUE TO LIST VIRTUAL BONSAI EVENTS IF ANY MORE ARE ANNOUNCED (NONE ARE LISTED AT THIS TIME).

2022

January

January 22 – 23, 2022 Arcadia, California

Baikoen Bonsai Kenkyukai 58th Annual Winter Silhouettes Show, Ayres Hall, Los Angeles Arboretum, 301 North Baldwin Avenue, Arcadia, California 91007. Founded by Frank Fusaji Nagata. 10:00 AM to 4:00 PM both days. CVBS members are cordially invited to be guest exhibitors. Deliver display anytime after 12:00 Noon on Friday, January 21, 2022. Display pickup is after 4:30 PM on Sunday, January 23, 2022. If you have any questions, please call Show Chairman Lindsay Shiba (909) 806-0937.

February

February 4 – 6, 2022 Santa Nella, California

18th Biannual California Shohin Seminar at Hotel Mission De Oro, 13070 S. Highway 33, Santa Nella, CA 95322. Call (800) 546-5697 or (209) 826-4444. Please be sure to mention you are making a reservation for the Shohin Seminar to receive our discount. The only event of its kind in the U.S., every two years the California Shohin Society organizes a Shohin Seminar where bonsai masters, teachers, students, and general enthusiasts from all over the country gather to learn and share their love of Shohin bonsai. The seminar includes demonstrations, vendors, exhibition, and workshops. All workshops are held on Saturday, February 5, 2022. Session A: 9:00 – 11:45 AM. Session B: 2:00 – 4:45 PM. Please bring your own tools. Wire will be provided. For detailed information and registration forms, please visit the California Shohin Society's website at www.calshohin.org.



February 19 – 20, 2022 Oakland, California

Annual Bonsai Garden at Lake Merritt Mammoth Auction & Sale will be held on Saturday, February 19 and Sunday, February 20, 2022 at 666 Bellevue Ave., Lakeside Park Garden Center in Oakland. You are invited to the biggest auction and sale of bonsai, pre-bonsai, pots, books, stands, and related material. A Mammoth fundraiser with all proceeds going to support the Bonsai Garden at Lake Merritt. Saturday auction preview starts at 12:00 PM with auction starting at 1:00 PM. Sunday sale from 9:00 AM to 3:00 PM. Large showing of vendors, plant sales, and much more. Purchase your bonsai needs. For further information, contact George Haas at gwhaas@comcast.net or stay tuned to BGLM Website.



February 26 – 27, 2022 San Marino, California

Annual Golden State Bonsai Federation Bonsai-A-Thon at the Huntington Library, Art Museum, and Botanical Gardens, 1151 Oxford Road, San Marino, CA 91108. Tour the expanded Chinese Garden! Walk through the Bonsai Nursery! Enjoy Vendors, Demonstrations, Auctions, Raffles, Huge Sales Area, Exhibits, Food, and Friends. Suiseki, the Japanese Art of Stone Appreciation talk by Suiseki Master Tom Elias. Foemina Grove creation by Huntington Bonsai Curator Ted Matson. Watch this space for more details and Covid protocols as the GSBF releases the event's details.



Barrett's Bonsai Tips (Continued from page 3)

portunity 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. 🌲

President's Message (Continued from page 1)

from 7:30 – 9:00 PM for the first CVBS club meeting in nearly two years.

Looking further ahead, plans are going forward for an in-person Golden State Bonsai Federation Bonsai-A-Thon at the Huntington Gardens February 26 – 27, 2022 (see listing above). Some activities will be outdoors, some indoors. Due to the mixed indoor/outdoor venue, more volunteers than usual will be needed. If you can volunteer, please contact volunteer coordinator Keith

Martin at (310) 927-0199 or by email at keithmartin@gmail.com. If you can work a few hours or half a day, please contact Keith and arrange the day and time. All volunteers must be vaccinated for Covid.

Remember, keep an eye on the Coming Events list on the back page of this newsletter. There already are several large, in-person bonsai events scheduled for early next year (see details above on this page).

Happy holidays—I hope to see everyone in January! 🌲