



conejo valley

BONSAI society

Volume 19 Number 2 February 2022

A member of the Golden State Bonsai Federation

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## Conejo Valley Bonsai Society Meetings

(When Covid-19 restrictions are lifted)

**Westlake Village City Hall Community Room**

31200 Oakcrest Drive  
Westlake Village, CA 91361  
**3<sup>rd</sup> Thursday of the Month**  
**7:30 PM – 9:00 PM**

Visit Our Website  
[www.cvbs-bonsai.org](http://www.cvbs-bonsai.org)

Follow Us on Facebook  
[www.facebook.com/conejovalleybonsaisociety](http://www.facebook.com/conejovalleybonsaisociety)

### President's Message

## Big News: CVBS Website Renovated!

By Marj Branson

The City of Westlake Village has decided that it will not reopen its Community Rooms this month. They will let us know about March. I am hopeful that we will be able to meet in person next month because many areas throughout the U.S. are opening up more and more every day. That includes California, which has loosened its anti-Covid mask restrictions, but it remains to be seen what Los Angeles County will do.

Meanwhile, the big news for the Conejo Valley Bonsai Society is a major renovation and updating of our website. Damon DuBois has been working on it, aided by Webmaster Tom McGuire. See Damon's article on page 4 of this newsletter for an overview of all the changes—and visit our spanking-new website at [www.cvbs-bonsai.org](http://www.cvbs-bonsai.org) to have a look.

Among the changes, many photographs of past annual exhibitions and demonstrations have been added. If you have pictures of one of our club activities, please let us know and we will see if they can be posted.

Many thanks to Damon, Tom, and the board members who worked on this long hoped-for facelift.

In other club business, our niche display calendar for 2022 needs to be filled. We have volunteers for February, April, and June (see list of volunteers on page 3). We need volunteers for March, May, and the rest of the year.

We do not know whether future niche displays will continue to be virtual by way of photographs in our

newsletter or physical displays during our monthly meetings. We will know more by early March.

### Bonsai Community News

The annual Bonsai-A-Thon, which was scheduled for February, has been postponed to April 2 and 3. The delay is because the Huntington Library, Art Museum, and Botanical Gardens has decided not to hold any large events this month due to Covid-19. Organizers are hopeful the April dates will hold. The Bonsai-A-Thon is the major fundraiser supporting the GSBF bonsai collection at



Marj Branson

the Huntington Gardens.

The Bonsai-A-Thon isn't the only event awaiting the Huntington's decision: the venerable California Bonsai Society is hoping it reopens to large events in time for CBS's planned annual exhibition March 19 – 20. (See page 10 for details.)

CVBS Membership dues are due. The annual dues are \$25.00 per person or \$30.00 per couple. I know many of you ordinarily pay your dues in person during club meetings, and if we had held our meetings in January or February, you could have done that. Unfortunately, this did not happen, so please send your check payable to the Conejo Valley Bonsai Society to:

Conejo Valley Bonsai Society  
c/o Marj Branson  
1169 Triunfo Canyon Road  
Westlake Village, CA 91361

We are keeping up our club communication through our club newsletter. If you are working on a bonsai project, please document it and send an article to Editor David Whiteside.

## Contact Us

(Click on Email Address)

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# CVBS Tentative Programs 2022

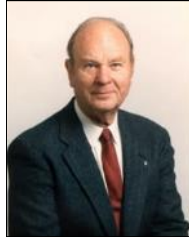
If you are interested in the CVBS Mentoring Program, please contact Marj Branson for more information & applications to participate.

January 20	<b>CANCELED DUE TO COVID</b> 7:30 PM: Brief Meeting followed by Workshop— <b>BRING YOUR TREES</b>
February 17	<b>CANCELED DUE TO COVID</b> 7:30 PM: Brief Meeting followed by <b>DEMONSTRATION: TBA</b>
March 17	<b>TENTATIVE</b> 7:30 PM: Brief Meeting followed by Workshop— <b>BRING YOUR TREES</b>
April 21	<b>TENTATIVE</b> 7:30 PM: Brief Meeting followed by <b>DEMONSTRATION: TBA</b>
May 19	<b>TENTATIVE</b> 7:30 PM: Brief Meeting followed by Workshop— <b>BRING YOUR TREES</b>
June 16	<b>TENTATIVE</b> 7:30 PM: Brief Meeting followed by <b>DEMONSTRATION: TBA</b>
July 21	<b>TENTATIVE</b> 7:30 PM: Brief Meeting followed by Workshop— <b>BRING YOUR TREES</b>
August 18	<b>TENTATIVE</b> 7:30 PM: Brief Meeting followed by Workshop and <b>Swap Meet</b> — <b>BRING YOUR TREES AND OTHER ITEMS</b>
September 15	<b>TENTATIVE</b> 7:30 PM: Brief Meeting followed by <b>PEER CRITIQUES—BRING YOUR EXHIBITION TREES</b>
October 1 – 2	<b>TENTATIVE</b> <b>19TH ANNUAL CVBS EXHIBITION</b>
October 20	<b>TENTATIVE</b> 7:30PM: Brief Meeting followed by Workshop— <b>BRING YOUR TREES</b>
November 17	<b>TENTATIVE</b> 7:30 PM: Brief Meeting with <b>Club Elections</b> followed by <b>DEMONSTRATION: TBA</b>
December 15	<b>TENTATIVE</b> 7:30 PM <b>HOLIDAY POTLUCK, RAFFLE &amp; AUCTION</b>

# It Is Peak Potting and Repotting Season

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.



Jim Barrett

February and March are probably the best two months of the year for potting and repotting bonsai and training trees from nursery cans to bonsai pots.

Deciding which bonsai needs repotting will depend on how long since its last potting and whether the tree has become root bound.

If the pot does not have a major inside lip, you may want to inspect the root ball by lifting the tree out of the pot. Look for a firm root ball with roots visible all around the sides and bottom.

Another indication that the tree needs repotting is the soil lifting above the edge of the pot. This shows that a mat of roots has formed on the bottom and is pushing the tree up. Trident maple bonsai are noted for this phenomenon.

One important reason for repotting is the tree has matured beyond its present container. Either it has grown larger or it deserves a more appropriate pot.

- There are several things to consider when you decide to proceed:
- Decide which tree or trees you want to pot.
  - Choose the pot. And it's a good idea to have a standby in case the first one doesn't work.
  - Place the wire or heavy plastic screen over each drain hole. Mesh should be at least 1/8 inch holes. Make sure screens are held in

place with wire clips.

- If you are going to tie the tree in [the pot], now is the time to install the tie wires. Use a wire of sufficient size and strength to do the job.
- Make sure the pot is clean inside and out.
- Have your favorite [soil] mix handy.

All of the preparations should be done before the root ball is disturbed. Many bonsai are lost or set back if the roots and soil are removed before everything is ready.

Some hobbyists take just enough soil and roots off to place the tree back in its original pot, leaving room for an inch or so of new soil. Others are more aggressive in cleaning out old soil and pruning the roots more severely. Both approaches are valid. It all depends on the condition of the tree, its root system, and the owner's goals for the tree. This all sounds pretty involved or complicated—it isn't, if you use common sense and do not get too rough with the tree.

Aesthetic considerations are:

- Tree and pot harmony or appropriateness.
- Is the tree placed in the pot properly?
- Is the tree planted at the proper angle or attitude?
- Is the front of the tree facing the viewer?

After repotting, place the tree in a shaded area to protect it from the wind. In a week to ten days, place it where you would normally. Wait about a month before fertilizing.

Speaking of fertilizers, you should have started fertilizing with organic fertilizers by now. Miracle Gro® and fast-acting fertilizers are best applied at 1/2 strength. Time-release and slow-acting chemical fertilizers, such as Osmocote® and Woodace®, are safe if you follow printed instructions. Some people add these to their soil mix. 🌱

## 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 March 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](mailto:cvbs.editor@earthlink.net)).

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

—Marj Branson

2022 Niche Displays (Month of publication)	
Feb.	David Whiteside
March	Volunteer Needed
April	Marj Branson
May	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.

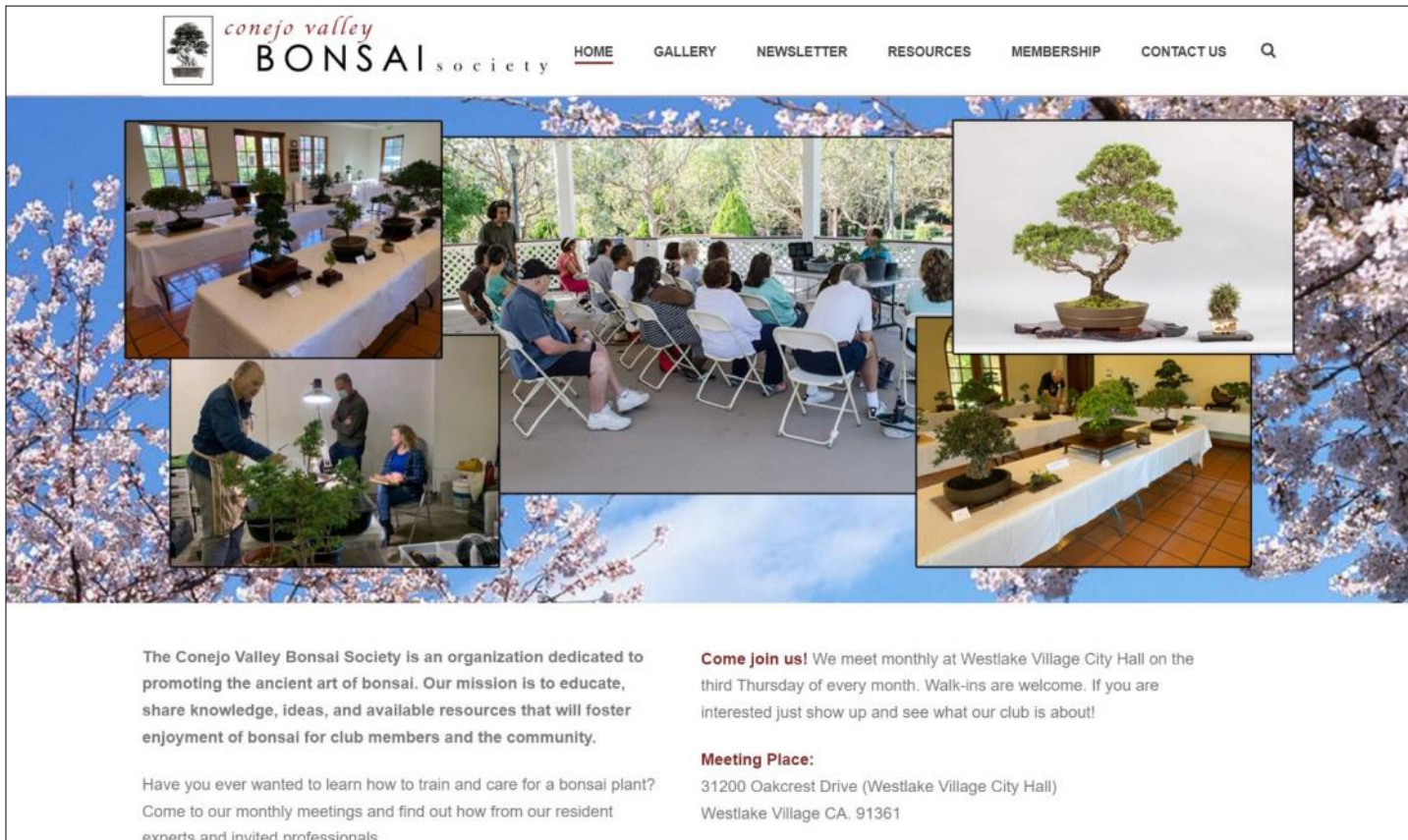
It's inexpensive and easy to join. Annual dues are \$25 for one, or \$30 for couples. Simply write a check (made payable to the Conejo Valley Bonsai Society) and mail it to: CVBS Membership, c/o Marj Branson, 1169 Triunfo Canyon Road, Westlake Village, CA 91361.

—Nancy Smeets



# Revamped CVBS Website Is Unveiled

By Damon DuBois



Over the last several months, we have been working on a completely revamped Conejo Valley Bonsai Society website. It was about 10 years old and was showing its age.

In addition to updating the overall visual design of the site, we wanted something that would present a public face to the world that truly represented CVBS and create a welcoming introduction for people who might be curious about the club or bonsai in general. The site has also been redesigned to be more user friendly and easier to navigate.

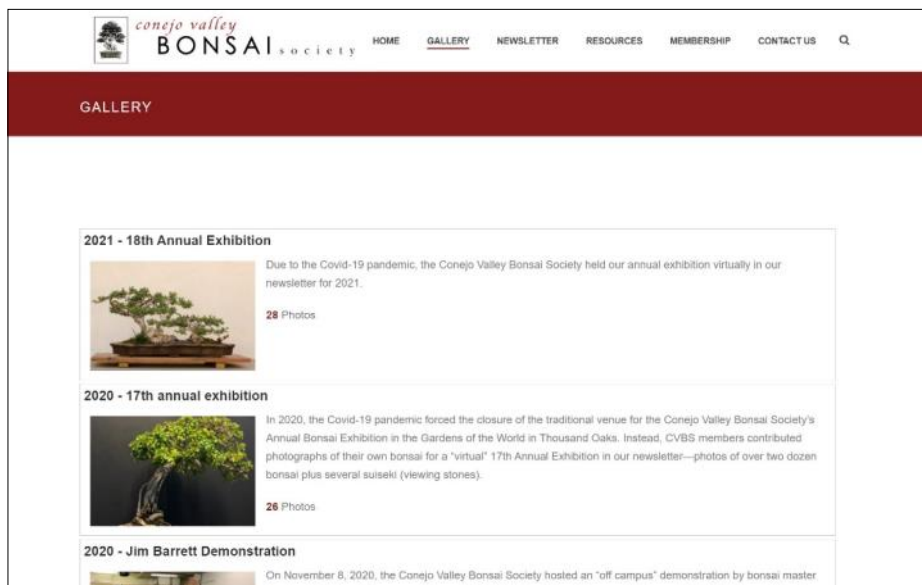
The changes begin with an all-new homepage, but we have expanded and updated other pages. For example, we've augmented our Resources pages. Now they not only include links to all local bonsai nurseries within reasonable driving distance of the club but also another page that showcases our library, including a catalog of all the books on our library's shelves. Moreover, we have added photo galleries featuring CVBS annual exhibitions as well as club demonstrations (there will be more additions, so be sure to check back frequently).

As before, but in a fresh presentation, the site includes all of the newsletters we've released as a club going back over a decade. And there are pages for new member applications and to contact the club.

I'd like to send out a special thanks to Tom McGuire, who hosts our website and who has been very generous with his

The Conejo Valley Bonsai Society's fresh homepage (above) and its expanded Gallery page (below) highlight the website's revamping.

Screenshots by Damon DuBois



time in helping us with the technical backend aspects of the site revamp. I'd also like to thank the board members who contributed to this update with resource lists, photos, and feedback on all aspects of the site.

So, if you haven't seen the new CVBS website yet, take a look at [www.cvbs-bonsai.org](http://www.cvbs-bonsai.org). Any and all feedback is welcome!



# A Chinese, Chinese Elm in Winter Silhouette

**Editor's Note:** CVBS Editor David Whiteside (yes, that's me) provided the virtual niche display for this, the February 2022 issue of our newsletter (see listing of virtual niche volunteers, page 3). Because physical meetings remain on hold due to the pandemic, I set up the display in my backyard and photographed it late last month. Here are some details about this niche tree.

I got this twin-trunk Chinese elm (*Ulmus parvifolia*) in a Golden State Bonsai Federation workshop with Scott Chad in November 2006, roughly five years after it was imported bare-rooted in wet sawdust from its home in the mountains of China. By birth, it is a Chinese, Chinese elm. After the required agricultural quarantine, Scott acquired the tree in 2003 and cared for it in his Lotus Bonsai Nursery in the Sierra Nevada foothills east of Sacramento until the workshop. I have tried to maintain its original naturalistic style typical of Chinese penjing.

It came in a Chinese-made pot, and I kept it in that pot (with occasional repotting, root work, and fresh soil) until moving it into this current, somewhat larger pot in 2021. It is now 30 inches tall. I took this January 2022 photograph just days before it started pushing fresh leaves, which are naturally tiny. Several years ago, a very nasty case of sooty mold resulted in some damage—I'm still redeveloping the crown of the right-hand trunk and rebalancing the foliage pads. Still, I like its winter silhouette.

—David Whiteside

Thousands of miles from its original home in the mountains of China, this Chinese elm does well in the ocean-moderated climate of my backyard. I keep it partially under a 60% shade cloth where it gets strong morning sunlight but its tiny leaves are protected from being sunburned by summer's afternoon heat.



Photo by David Whiteside



# 58th Annual Winter Silhouettes Bonsai Exhibition

I went to the 58th annual Winter Silhouettes bonsai show on Sunday, January 23, 2022 at the Los Angeles Arboretum in Arcadia, just east of Pasadena. This show is organized by the Baiko-En Bonsai Kenkyukai Society, a Los Angeles-based educational non-profit dedicated to the art of bonsai. It is timed to show off the intricate branch structure of deciduous trees in the winter without leaves.

The trees were beautiful and it was a great opportunity to study a wide range of species from an impressive variety of top-notch bonsai artists in Southern California. Here are a few of my favorites. You can also find a YouTube video showing a walkthrough of the show via the Baiko-En website at [www.baikoenbonsai.com](http://www.baikoenbonsai.com).

—Mike Blumenberg



Baiko-En Bonsai Kenkyukai Society Vice President and Show Chair Lindsay Shiba (above) explaining the art of bonsai.



Two Shohin bonsai of unknown species (above left and right).



Tokonoma featuring a winged elm by Jaime Chavarria (right). Two close-up photos of the wings (above and below).



Photos by Mike Blumenberg





**Catlin Elm forest by Ellen Keneshea (left) and a closeup of the path wandering through the forest (right).**



**Kiyohime maple by Tom Lau (left).**

**Japanese maple by Ed Clark (right).**

**Ume, leafless but bursting with flowers, by Tom Lau (right below).**

**Chinese elm by Jacqueline Zender (bottom left).**

**Crape myrtle by Cathy Benson (bottom right).**





# Bunjin or Literati Bonsai: What's in a Name?

By Ken Martin

## Online Video Reviews

Return engagement: two of my favorite bonsai experts, Bjorn Bjorholm and Jason Chan, demonstrate and discuss the special style of bunjin or literati bonsai or penjing. Bjorn works on a pine while Jason's material is a juniper. There's a lot to learn in both YouTube videos.

**Bjorn Bjorholm**  
Eisei-en Bonsai / Bonsai-U  
Nashville, TN  
Styling a Bunjin Pine  
14 1/2 minutes  
YouTube address: [Bonsai-U Styling a Bunjin Pine](#)

Bjorn gives an excellent tutorial on the origin and history of bunjin or literati style bonsai and the characteristics that define this style of bonsai today. He discusses why he places the branches and why he expects the lower branch to catch up in foliage growth. Although you don't see a dramatic difference in the after picture, he said this bonsai needs a couple of years for the foliage to get denser. A definite watch if you are at all interested in bunjin bonsai.

**Bjorn Bjorholm with a pine before it's styled as a bunjin style bonsai (near right) and after the tree has been styled (far right).**



**Jason Chan**  
Eastern Leaf Bonsai  
Creating a Literati Bonsai – Juniper Bonsai Two Years of Styling and Work  
7+ minutes  
YouTube address: [Creating a Literati Bonsai – Juniper Bonsai Two Years of Styling and Work](#)

Another literati demonstration. Jason works on a bonsai he repotted in a demo two years ago. He does a complete wiring in triple time as does Bjorn, which results in a lot of information packed in just seven minutes.

**Jason Chan with a literati style juniper before refinement (near right) and after he has worked on it two years later (far 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 (available on the revamped CVBS website [www.cvbs-bonsai.org](http://www.cvbs-bonsai.org)).

—Mike Blumenberg

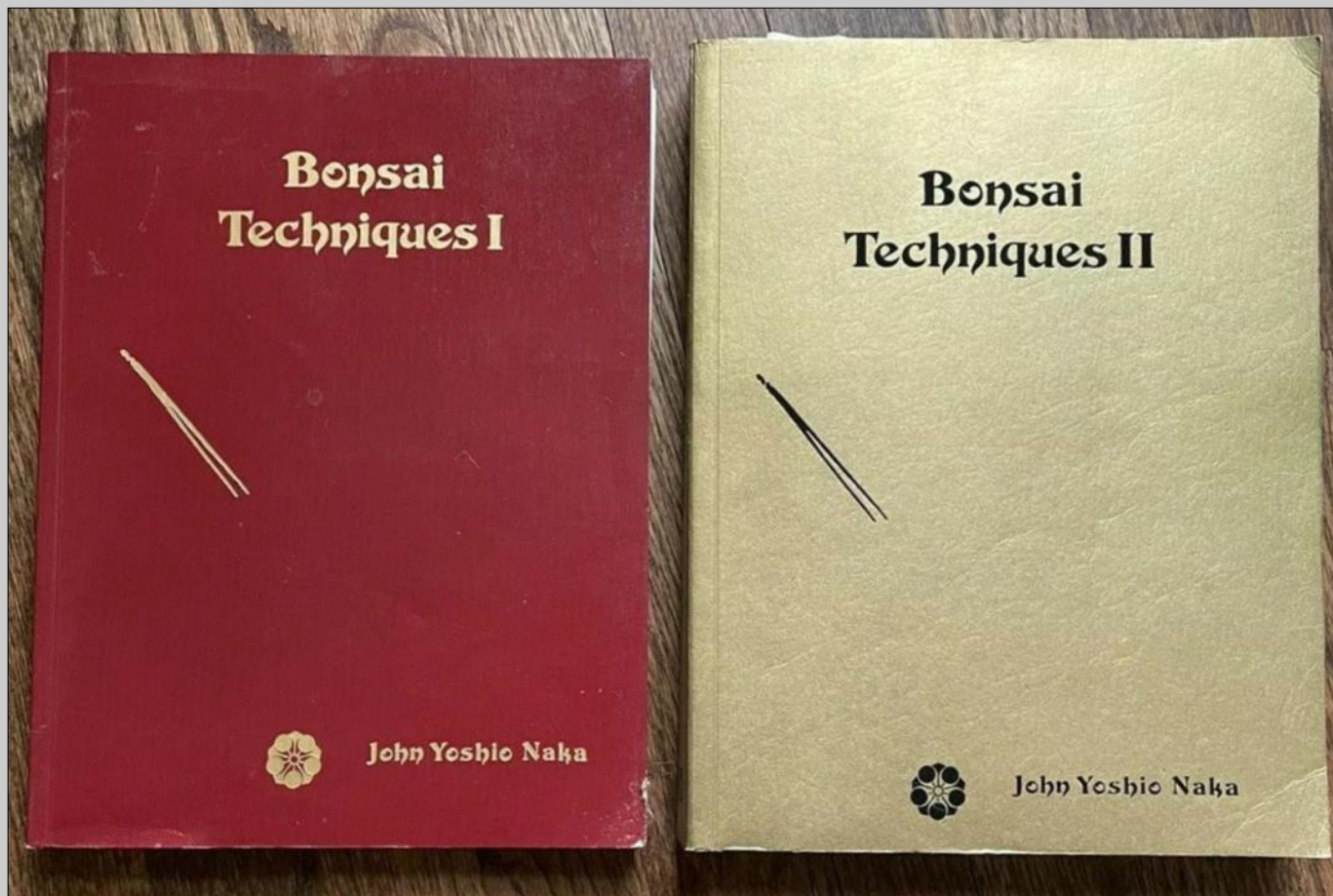
## Book of the Month

*Bonsai Techniques II* by John Yoshio Naka (Publisher: Bonsai Institute of California, Whittier, CA, 1982).

Our next Book of the Month is John Yoshio Naka's *Bonsai Techniques II*. The photo below shows Naka's *Bonsai Techniques I* and *II*, but this was captured from an eBay advertisement; the CVBS library has *Bonsai Techniques I*, but doesn't yet have a copy of *Bonsai Techniques II*. Naka's *Bonsai Techniques I* is widely considered to be one of the best references for bonsai hobbyists. It provides comprehensive guidance in straight forward text and simple illustrations. It is widely available, and every bonsai hobbyist is familiar with it. *Bonsai Techniques II* isn't as revered as *Bonsai Techniques I* and isn't as available. I would like to add it to the CVBS Library and create a matched set like the photo but haven't been able to find a reasonably priced copy. I periodically search eBay and Amazon and recently found copies priced from \$200 (well used) to \$1,199 (pristine). I'll keep searching for a copy we can afford, unless someone wants to donate a copy to the club's library.

—Mike Blumenberg

**John Yoshio Naka's legendary *Bonsai Techniques I* (below left) and its less well known and rare sequel, *Bonsai Techniques II* (below right). The CVBS Library would like to acquire the latter, but copies are difficult to find and expensive even in worn condition. Photo below is from an eBay advertisement.**



Screen Shot by Mike Blumenberg

## Coming Events (Click on the Addresses to visit Websites or send Emails)

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

**2022**

### February

#### **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](mailto:gwhaas@comcast.net) or stay tuned to BGLM Website <https://bonsailakemerritt.com>.



#### **February 26 – 27, 2022 San Marino, California POSTPONED See April 2 – 3 Below**

Annual Golden State Bonsai Federation Bonsai-A-Thon at the Huntington.

### March

#### **March 19 – 20, 2022, San Marino, California**

Annual California Bonsai Society Exhibition at the Huntington Library, Art Museum, and Botanical Gardens, 1151 Oxford Road, San Marino, CA 91108. Hours 10:00 AM – 5:00 PM Saturday and Sunday. Plans for demonstrations are still underway so be sure to check back here for announcements.



### April

#### **April 2 – 3, 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. For more details watch the GSBF Collection at The Huntington website.



#### **April 9 – 10, 2022 Sacramento, California**

American Bonsai Association, Sacramento: Annual Spring Show at the Shepard Garden and Arts Center, 3330 McKinley Blvd, Sacramento. Show hours are Saturday, 10 AM – 4 PM, and Sunday, 10:00 AM – 4:00 PM, with demonstrations each day by headliner Andrew Robson at 1:30 PM. There is a large vendor and member sales area, free admission and parking, and a beginner workshop Sunday morning from 10:00 AM – Noon (to register contact Renee Seely). The benefit drawings on both Saturday and Sunday will include each day's demonstration tree and many bonsai/bonsai related items. For additional information visit our website: American Bonsai Association of Sacramento [www.abasbonsai.org](http://www.abasbonsai.org) or contact Renee Seely, (916) 929-2106 or email [breadcrumb@comcast.net](mailto:breadcrumb@comcast.net).

#### **April 30th & May 1st, 2022 Palo Alto, CA**

Kusamura Bonsai Club 62nd Annual Show: Annual Show at Addison School, 650 Addison Street, Palo Alto. Show hours are Saturday, Noon - 4pm, and Sunday, 11am - 4pm, with headliner Bob Shimon of Mendocino Coast Bonsai presenting at 1:30pm Saturday. Join us and see over 50 Bonsai Trees on display. There will be a Sale and Benefit drawing with over 100 bonsai and pots. Club members will put on a demonstration on Sunday at 1:30pm. For more information contact show co-chairs: Lynne O'Dell at [lynnemo@gmail.com](mailto:lynnemo@gmail.com) or Idris Anderson at [idrisan@gmail.com](mailto:idrisan@gmail.com). Details will also be posted at Kusamura Bonsai Club website at [www.kusamurabonsai.org](http://www.kusamurabonsai.org).

### June

#### **June 18 - 19, 2022 Livermore, California**

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

### November

#### **November 12th & 13th, 2022 Oakland, CA**

The Pacific Bonsai Expo is to be held November 12 – 13, 2022 in Oakland, CA at the Bridge Yard. The Pacific Bonsai Expo is a juried exhibition featuring 70 outstanding bonsai displays and a selection of the community's top vendors. The Jurors, Bjorn Bjorholm, Ryan Neil, and William N. Valavanis will select the trees. For more information go to the homepage using the following link Pacific Bonsai Expo at [www.pacificbonsaiexpo.com](http://www.pacificbonsaiexpo.com).