



conejo valley

BONSAI society

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A member of the Golden State Bonsai Federation 

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Conejo Valley Bonsai Society Meetings

Westlake Village City Hall
Community Room
31200 Oakcrest Drive
Westlake Village, CA 91361
3rd Thursday of the Month
7:30 PM – 9:00 PM

Visit Our Website
www.cvbs-bonsai.org

President's Message

Good News: CVBS Meetings Resume!

By Marj Branson

What good news we can finally report: We will have our March meeting in-person at our normal meeting place! (See box, lower left of this page if you need a reminder.)

Please note that our Westlake Village venue is in Los Angeles County and the city requires that we operate under that county's Covid rules: "Masks continue to be required for indoor settings with higher risks for transmission: ... Masks are strongly recommended, but not required, for all persons, regardless of vaccine status, in other indoor public settings and businesses. ... [B]usinesses, venue operators, and hosts may choose to require masking, regardless of vaccination status, by patrons, visitors, attendees, and workers ..."

These are fluid guidelines and can be changed by the LA County Health Department. **For the March meeting, the CVBS Board has decided that while we will not require masks, out of an abundance of caution and mindful that many of our members are older and/or immune compromised, we are requesting that all people attending wear a mask.**

This meeting will be a workshop, so please bring your trees to work on and your bonsai tools.

CVBS Business

Dues for 2022 are due. If you have not paid, please bring your check or cash to the March meeting. Membership fees remain \$25.00 single and \$30.00 couples. Please see the details on page 3 of this newsletter.

As we have not had a meeting for over two years, I would like to review a few of the club activities and get your thoughts about what you would like the club to organize. Although the Covid mandates are lifting, not all club mem-

bers may feel comfortable participating in group activities. Again, we can discuss that at the March meeting.

I would like to reestablish the niche sign up for our monthly meetings. I will circulate the sign-up sheet during the March 17 meeting for you to select the month you can participate. See page 3 for the current schedule. Remember the niche program serves two purposes:

1. You get experience setting up your tree as an exhibition display
2. You can display a tree as a work in progress and discuss it with the group

For the moment, we are not having refreshments as during the Covid pandemic, food at gatherings is not recommended. We currently do not have a Refreshments chair, so as we get back to normal, we will need a new Refreshment committee chair volunteer. Please give this some thought.


To prepare the Community Room for our meetings requires help in setting up the tables and chairs and to take them down after our meeting. We would appreciate volunteers to help.

Coming Events

There are two major bonsai events coming up in the next few weeks.

- First, the California Bonsai Society's annual show is March 19 – 20 (see pages 4 and 10).
- Second, the annual Bonsai-A-Thon is scheduled for April 2 – 3 (see page 10).

Finally, remember to visit our updated website at www.cvbs-bonsai.org. Thank you, Damon DuBois, for all your work on our Internet presence.

Hoping to see you all March 17. 



Marj Branson

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(Click on Email Address)

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CVBS Programs 2022

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

January 20	CANCELED DUE TO COVID 7:30 PM: Brief Meeting followed by Workshop— BRING YOUR TREES
February 17	CANCELED DUE TO COVID 7:30 PM: Brief Meeting followed by DEMONSTRATION: TBA
March 17	CONFIRMED! 7:30 PM: Brief Meeting followed by Workshop— BRING YOUR TREES
April 21	TENTATIVE 7:30 PM: Brief Meeting followed by DEMONSTRATION: TBA
May 19	TENTATIVE 7:30 PM: Brief Meeting followed by Workshop— BRING YOUR TREES
June 16	TENTATIVE 7:30 PM: Brief Meeting followed by DEMONSTRATION: TBA
July 21	TENTATIVE 7:30 PM: Brief Meeting followed by Workshop— BRING YOUR TREES
August 18	TENTATIVE 7:30 PM: Brief Meeting followed by Workshop and Swap Meet — BRING YOUR TREES AND OTHER ITEMS
September 15	TENTATIVE 7:30 PM: Brief Meeting followed by PEER CRITIQUES—BRING YOUR EXHIBITION TREES
October 7 – 8	TENTATIVE 19TH ANNUAL CVBS EXHIBITION Gardens of the World
October 20	TENTATIVE 7:30PM: Brief Meeting followed by Workshop— BRING YOUR TREES
November 17	TENTATIVE 7:30 PM: Brief Meeting with Club Elections followed by DEMONSTRATION: TBA
December 15	TENTATIVE 7:30 PM HOLIDAY POTLUCK, RAFFLE & AUCTION

Spring Priorities: More Potting & Repotting

By Jim Barrett

Editor's Note: While the Conejo Valley Bonsai Society's monthly meetings were suspended due to the pandemic, we continued to publish Barrett's Bonsai Tips. Jim's wisdom will continue to appear here as we return to "normal."



Jim Barrett

If you plan to transplant wisteria after blooms are gone, don't fertilize for at least one month after repotting. If you have wisteria and do not plan to repot, fertilize right after the blooms are gone. It is said that wisteria require three to four times as much fertilizer as most bonsai. Just make sure the fertilizer you use is slow release.

Fertilize quince, ume, crabapple, and pomegranate this month. Do not fertilize satsuki azaleas until blooms are gone.

If you plan to repot azaleas, you can still trim fairly severely. Azaleas that have not been repotted for two or more years may be repotted this month, especially if the plant is to be heavily pruned. Wash all of the exhausted soil from the roots, making sure that you clean out all of the old soil directly under the base of the tree. Be careful of the fine feeder roots and do not let them dry out.

Several soil mixes are now being used. All provide excellent drainage with the ingredients tending to provide an acid reaction on the pH scale (pH 5 to 6 is recommended by Mr. Richard Ota).

Repotting or potting for the first time:

- Black pine from nursery container to pot or pot-to-pot
- Trident maple from nursery container to pot or pot-to-pot
- Zelkova from nursery container to pot or pot-to-pot

- Beech, hornbeam, juniper, and Atlas cedar may all be potted or repotted now

Most deciduous trees should be in full leaf by now, so wait until the new growth has hardened if you plan to repot maple, elm, hornbeam, and zelkova.

Fertilizers such as cottonseed with bone meal and blood meal may be used. Use four parts cottonseed and one part bone meal to make a good, safe fertilizer for the promotion of blooms and good color. Stop feeding one month before blooms appear.

If your elms, Japanese maples, pomegranates, etc., are leafing out, wait until this new growth hardens before repotting

Look out for woolly aphids on apple, quince, and other plants attractive to aphids. Malathion with a little horticultural oil mixed in should do the trick. The oil allows the Malathion to stick and penetrate the white fuzz covering the critter. Spray again in about ten days. This treatment will also take care of regular aphids and spider mites.

Start fine-tuning show trees [for the CVBS annual exhibition or for a niche display]. Trees to be shown should not have large-gauge wire on trunks or visible on large branches. It is, however, permissible to have wire on medium to small branches providing it is neatly applied. Annealed copper or anodized aluminum are preferred wire choices.

If you wish to darken bright copper wire, soak it overnight in Purex or diluted muratic acid (swimming pool acid). Wash it with clear water before using.

Start getting rid of moss growing on trunks and base roots. Be careful not to damage rough bark trees such as black pine and cork bark elm.

Are you planning to change pots before [showing your bonsai]? Do it now so the tree will look settled in its show container. This is a common practice in Japan. The show pot is then stored away after the show and the tree is returned to its everyday pot. 🌳

CVBS Niche Displays

Niche Display Program Change

As a transition to more normal times, the niche in this issue is a virtual presentation (see table, right) but our traditional practice of club members setting up mini exhibition displays on a table in our meeting room will resume with our March 17 meeting.

A new Covid surge could force us to return to virtual niche displays. If so, we'll ask 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 are changing how we list niche volunteers (right). For this, the March 2022 issue, Nancy Smeets provided the virtual niche display (see page 5). At the in-person March meeting, I will present a bonsai created by Jim Barrett during a demo last year (see the January 2021 newsletter issue, page 4).

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/meeting)	
March (Virtual)	Nancy Smeets
March (Physical)	Jim Barrett
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. With Covid-19 restrictions lifting, we are resuming 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). Membership includes demonstrations by bonsai experts, workshops, critiques, member swap meets, field trips, and this award-winning newsletter.

Dues for 2022 are now payable. 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

California Bonsai Society Presents the 65th Annual Show

March 19 and 20

at the Huntington Library, Art Galleries and Botanic Gardens.

Open both days from 10 AM to 4 PM, demonstration at 1PM daily
The Brody Botanical Center at The Huntington Library, Art Galleries and Botanic Garden
1151 Oxford Road, San Marino



Please refer to the Huntington website (huntington.org) for Information on Covid restrictions and the need for reservations.

Double-Trunk Flowering Apricot Signals Spring

Editor's Note: Nancy Smeets provided the virtual niche display for this, the March 2022 issue of our newsletter (see listing of niche volunteers, page 3). As we transition back to live, in-person CVBS meetings this month, Nancy provided what we hope will be the final virtual display; she set up the display in her backyard and photographed it earlier this month. Here are some details about this niche tree. Note that there will be a live display of a foemina group planting created by Jim Barrett at the March 17 meeting.

I bought this ume (aka Flowering apricot, scientific name *Prunus mume*) from Roy Nagatoshi's Fuji Bonsai Nursery in Sylmar, CA, a few years ago. I chose this one because if you look carefully, the tiny delicate (and fragrant!) flowers are just starting to come out. I like the double trunk. The pot came from the pottery village in Japan when I was there in 2018. That big rock came from Jim Barrett.

—Nancy Smeets

In a sure sign of spring, Nancy Smeets' double-trunk ume bonsai (right) is just beginning to show flower buds.



Photo by Nancy Smeets

A Japanese Black Pine's Slow Recovery

By David Whiteside

In June 2007, I acquired a Japanese black pine (*Pinus thunbergii*) in a workshop during the California Bonsai Society's 50th annual exhibition at the Huntington Library, Art Museum, and Botanical Gardens. The workshop was led by well-known bonsai expert Ann Erb.

I gradually developed the tree in its original container under the guidance of my long-time teacher, Ted Matson (who is now the curator of the Huntington's bonsai collections), for many years before transferring it to a pot custom made for it by Jim Barrett. Finally, in January 2016, I displayed it for the first time as the niche display at the Conejo Valley Bonsai Society's monthly meeting (see photo, this page).

Then the trouble began. Branches started dying back, derailing my plans to show the tree at both the Descanso Bonsai Society's annual exhibition in June and our own exhibition in October 2016. Eventually, I lost both major and minor branches front, back, and sides. Ted Matson and I were puzzled what was causing this turn in the tree's fortunes and we never were able to find an effective treatment.

At last, inspired by something CVBS life member Ann Lofquist said about moving distressed trees out of bonsai pots into the ground, I decided to remove the pine from its cherished Barrett pot. Lacking appropriate space for it in my garden, I moved it into a large plastic dish-bussing tub. (I drilled drainage holes in the bottom.) I was hoping this would give the tree's roots adequate room to spread and recover.

After several years in its gray plastic tub, the black pine started to revive. By spring 2021, it was pushing vigorous new candles. In June of last year, I pruned the candles. Then I plucked old and spent needles and pruned out unnecessary branches to open up space for aesthetic reasons as well as to allow room for future growth.



January 2016 (above): My Japanese black pine as the niche display at CVBS's monthly meeting. The pot was custom made by Jim Barrett for this tree.



In January of this year, I moved the black pine into a new, rectangular, unglazed brown pot somewhat larger than the Jim Barrett pot it once inhabited, which I now felt the tree had outgrown. Now, we'll see whether it pushes vigorous candles later this spring or summer. If it does, I will begin the process of nurturing shorter needles, refining its shape, perhaps carving some of its deadwood—all in preparation for showing it later this year in CVBS's October exhibition and possibly Descanso's June 2023 exhibit. 🌲

Circa 2015 (left): Detail of trunk and main branches—still healthy, before dieback began.

January 2018 (right): Note jins created from dead branches. (Photo taken in Ted Matson's garage classroom.)



June 2021 (below): Recovering in its gray plastic bussing tub. Note vigorous candles.



January 2022 (right): Still in its tub, but candled and pruned, ready for potting.

January 2022 (right): The Japanese black pine, in its new, larger pot. Now, the wait for fresh candle growth begins.



Pruning and Styling Junipers and Elms

By Ken Martin

Online Video Reviews

Two great videos: Ryan Neil and Jason Chan. There's a lot to learn in both YouTube videos.

Ryan Neil

Bonsai Mirai

Portland, OR

How to Make a Juniper Bonsai

30 minutes

YouTube address: Search for Bonsai Mirai: How to Make a Juniper Bonsai

Ryan takes the viewer through the entire process of creating a great juniper bonsai. The first step he describes is the cleaning process during which he removes material he knows he won't use, leaving unwanted branches long enough to make jins out of them.

The cleaning process made it easier to see where the front of the tree should be. Before cleaning, he thought the front of the composition was opposite where it finally ended up. He explained the three factors which made the front decision, representing each with a pin in the soil. All three pins were close together, so the front was decided.

He then provided an excellent tutorial on how to make natural-looking deadwood. Next a tutorial on trunk and main branch wiring, then primary and tertiary branch wiring. Then he explained how to incorporate all these processes into a very pleasant-looking bonsai.

If you do nothing else this month, watch this 30-minute video. It is packed with useful, well explained information on how to execute the many steps to produce an eye-pleasing bonsai.



Ryan Neil with a juniper before it's styled (upper right) and after it has been styled (bottom right).

Screen captures by Ken Martin

Jason Chan

Eastern Leaf Bonsai

How to prune a Chinese elm

10 minutes

YouTube address: How to Prune a Chinese Elm Bonsai: 2 Key Techniques

Since I have five or so Chinese elms that have started to leaf out, I thought this video from Jason would be worth watching, and I was right. I remember Jason when he was doing a demo on Chinese elms at one of our CVBS club meetings several years ago saying prune a small branch back to two leaves when it has lengthened to 5 leaves. He has modified this somewhat: now he says don't prune a pinkish immature branch but go back to where the branch is a more mature tan colored. (He did say this may be at five or six leaves.) Then prune the branch about 1/4 inch after a leaf that is on the side of the branch where you want a new branch to grow. If you prune the immature branch, it may not grow, or if it does it will continue straight rather than producing a bend. 🌳



This screen shot (right) shows the result of pruning one side of a Chinese elm.

CVBS Bonsai Library Back to ‘Normal’?

Now that the Conejo Valley Bonsai Society is restarting in-person meetings, it’s time to return any overdue items borrowed from the CVBS Book Mobile while our club meetings were suspended amid the Covid-19 outbreak. But remember that if you want a good bonsai book or DVD to review, you can see me during a meeting or give me a call and request a book, pamphlet, periodical, or DVD. For a complete list of our library holdings, please see “Library” under the “Resources” tab on the revamped CVBS website www.cvbs-bonsai.org.

—Mike Blumenberg

Book of the Month

Bonsai Mirai Asymmetry: Ted Matson podcast interview by Ryan Neil (Publisher: Bonsai Mirai, December 9, 2021).

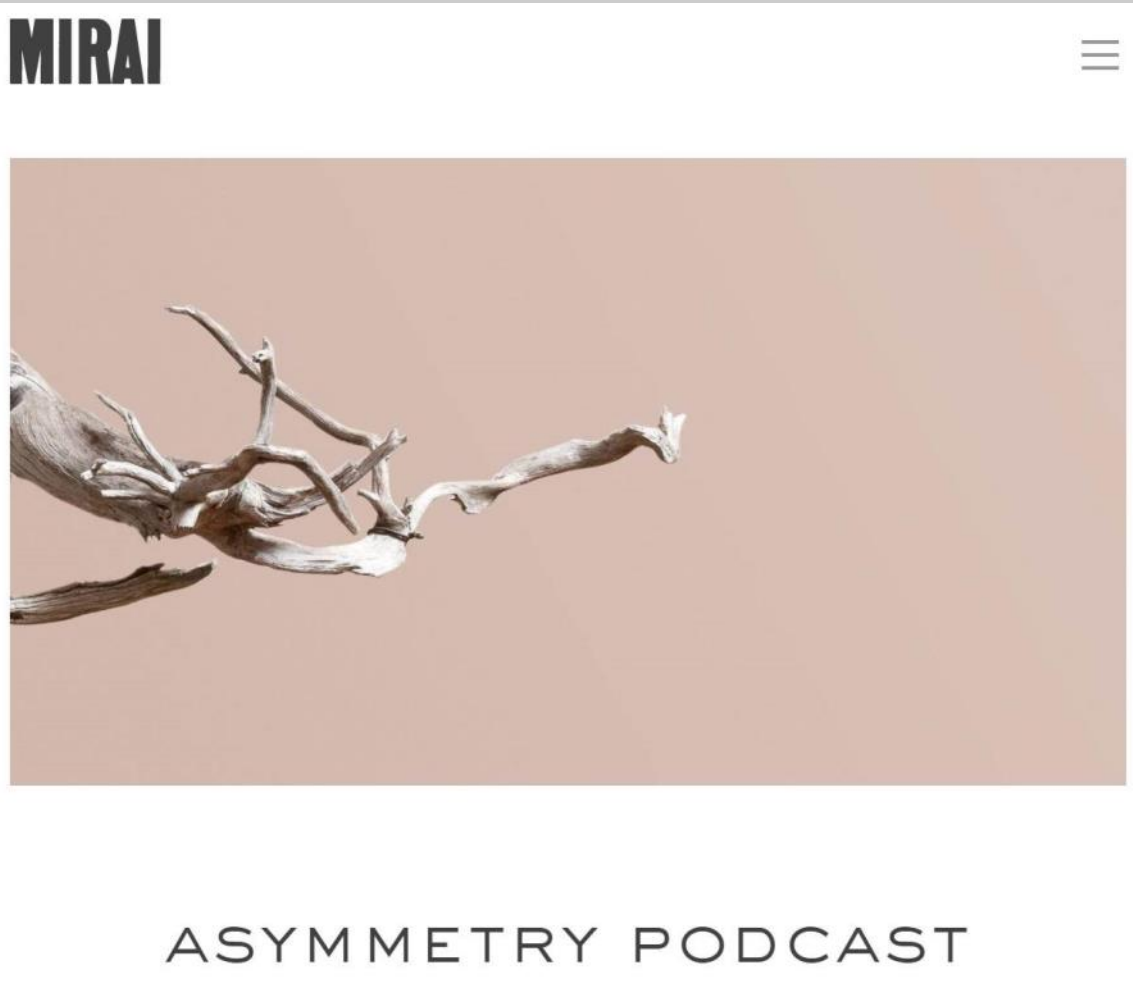
I love audio books. Life is busy and it is hard to slow down, sit down, and read. An audio book, however, allows me to complete chores while I “read” another book or podcast. The CVBS library doesn’t have audio books, and I didn’t have much time this past month, so I turned to Bonsai Mirai’s series of podcasts for this month’s book review. Mirai’s “Asymmetry Podcast” is “a place for conversation, incubation, and the connection of other mediums to the world of bonsai.” It can be accessed by going to Bonsai Mirai Asymmetry at <https://bonsaimirai.podbean.com>.

There are dozens of episodes to choose from, but the episode that caught my eye was an interview with Ted Matson, curator of the bonsai collections at The Huntington Gardens in San Marino. The Mirai website notes that Ted is “one of the most influential bonsai teachers and demonstrators in North America.” The Matson podcast was released December 9, 2021.

Some CVBS members have had the opportunity to take classes with Ted or work under his tutelage at The Huntington. I personally have seen Ted at multiple Bonsai-A-Thons, but I didn’t really know his story. This podcast intrigued me because it promised to share Ted’s own journey and role in the evolution of bonsai in Southern California.

In the podcast, Ted talks about his roots in North Dakota, his initial infatuation with bonsai, moving to California and caring for bonsai in an apartment window shaft, and ultimately joining The Huntington. He talks about the cultural shift that allowed Caucasian Americans like himself to learn bonsai from Japanese American artists like John Yoshio Naka. The podcast is also a conversation with Ryan Neil, Bonsai Mirai’s owner and one of Ted’s students and now an internationally recognized bonsai artist himself. It’s a good story, and I recommend you check it out next time you have a few chores to perform.

—Mike Blumenberg



Screen Shot by Mike Blumenberg

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

IN-PERSON BONSAI EVENTS IN CALIFORNIA ARE RETURNING FOR THE REMAINDER OF 2022 (see below). MANY GARDENS ALSO 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

March

March 19 – 20, 2022, San Marino, California

California Bonsai Society 65th Annual Exhibition. At the Huntington Library, Art Museum, and Botanical Gardens, Brody Botanical Center, 1151 Oxford Road, San Marino, CA 91108. Hours 10:00 AM – 4:00 PM Saturday and Sunday. There will be a demonstration at 1:00 PM each day. The CBS Exhibition is free with general admission to the Huntington. Weekend fees: Adult \$29, Senior (65+) \$24. At press time, Covid protocols were masks optional outside and optional but strongly recommended indoors. This may change, so please check the Huntington website prior to your visit. **NOTE:** Capacity limited daily. **WEEKEND RESERVATIONS REQUIRED – NO WALK-INS.** Check admission, Covid, and Huntington policies at the Gardens' website www.huntington.org.



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, Brody Botanical Center, 1151 Oxford Road, San Marino, CA 91108. Hours 10:00 AM – 5:00 PM Saturday and Sunday. The two-day celebration of the art of bonsai includes displays of masterpiece trees, demonstrations of bonsai styling, prize drawings, a “bonsai bazaar,” and a live auction at 2 p.m. each day. Proceeds from the event support the GSBF Collection at The Huntington. 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. **NOTES:** At press time, Covid protocols were masks optional outside and optional but strongly recommended indoors. This may change, so please check the Huntington website prior to your visit. The Bonsai-A-Thon is free with general admission to the Huntington. Although GSBF may have a limited number of free passes available, be prepared to pay the Huntington's weekend entry fees of Adult \$29, Senior (65+) \$24. Capacity at the Huntington is limited daily. **WEEKEND RESERVATIONS REQUIRED – NO WALK-INS.** Check admission, Covid, and Huntington policies at the Gardens' website www.huntington.org.



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 or contact Renee Seely, (916) 929-2106 or email breadcrust@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 or Idris Anderson at idrisan@gmail.com. Details will also be posted at Kusamura Bonsai Club website at 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.