



*conejo valley*

**BONSAI** society

Volume 19 Number 4 April 2022

A member of the Golden State Bonsai Federation 

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### **President's Message**

## **CVBS Plans Workshop Meetings**

By Marj Branson

The immediate outlook for the Conejo Valley Bonsai Society: more in-person meetings! Unless there's a sudden, dramatic turnaround in the Covid situation, we are planning to continue meeting in our regular venue, the Westlake Village City Hall Community Room, where we had our first meeting in two years on March 17. Although turnout was small, it was good to catch up with everyone. Hopefully, we'll see more members at our April 21 meeting.

There are still concerns with Covid such as when, where, and whether to wear a mask. Because our meetings are in Los Angeles County, we must follow the LA County Department of Public Health Orders, which currently state, "Regardless of vaccination status, it is strongly recommended that people continue to wear masks that fit and filter well in all indoor public places." So, CVBS attendees are encouraged to wear masks during our meetings.

These are fluid restrictions and can change per the LA County Health Department. We will notify you via email of any last-minute changes as we learn of them.

During our March meeting, we discussed club activities for the next few months. The consensus was to hold workshops that include member critiques, making suggestions when re-

quested (see CVBS Programs, page 2).

The annual Golden State Bonsai Federation's Bonsai-A-Thon at The Huntington Library, Art Collections and Botanical Gardens the first weekend of this month was very well attended. It was good to catch up with fellow bonsai enthusiasts from other clubs. See page 4 of this newsletter for some details of the program. The weekend worked well with members carpooling when possible. I would like to thank those CVBS club members who helped work over the weekend.

Our niche volunteer list has gaps. If you can sign up, please let me

know at our next meeting. (See the list on page 3.)

### **Membership**

Please remember to pay your dues for 2022. (See below and page 3 for details.) Please bring your check to our next meeting.

Membership Chair Nancy Smeets generously has provided the club with new badges. Get yours when you pay your dues. If we don't have your badge already in stock, Nancy will have them made and give them to you at the next meeting. Everyone agrees, the badges look very smart! Thank you, Nancy.

I hope to see everyone at our monthly meeting, Thursday April 21st. 🌳



**Marj Branson**

## **Conejo Valley Bonsai Society Meetings**

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)

### **CVBS Membership**

## **2022 Dues Are Due!**

It's time to renew your Conejo Valley Bonsai Society membership. It's still a bargain at \$25 for one person, \$30 for two or more. As in-person meetings resume following the coronavirus pandemic, you'll get a rich program of bonsai demonstrations, workshops, and activities as well as this award-winning newsletter and a custom-made name badge.

Simply bring a check made payable to the Conejo Valley Bonsai Society to the next meeting or mail it to: CVBS Membership, c/o Marj Branson, 1169 Triunfo Canyon Road, Westlake Village, CA 91361.

—Nancy Smeets

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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.

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

# Now Is a Busy Time for Deciduous Bonsai

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."

Since our [newsletter publication dates are] well past the middle of the month, we will attempt to include information that is important for the next month as well.

This time of year can be a very busy one for those of us with deciduous trees.

Deciduous trees need constant attention to keep upper growth in balance with the middle growth and the lower areas. Cut long shoots in the tops of maples, elms, and

**Deciduous trees need constant attention to keep upper growth in balance with the middle growth and the lower areas.**

especially zelkova, to one or two nodes or leaves. Rub off unwanted sprouts before they develop into shoots.

Prune for shape and remove large leaves that block sunlight to the interior of the tree. From now on our task should be to encourage ramification, shape, and health.

Fertilize your trees with slow acting fertilizers or time

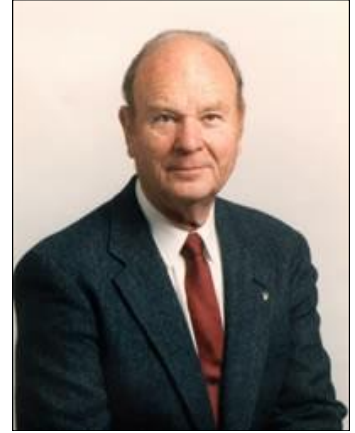
-release plant food. It is better to feed a little more often than a lot once in a while.

Resist candle pruning your black pine bonsai until June or later. Black pine, in growing containers that need more development, can be candle pruned in May.

Repotting—bonsai pot to bonsai pot—can still be done safely, especially pomegranate, most ficus, elms, wisteria, junipers, and azaleas. Olives can be potted, or if you wish, they can be worked on now.

Watch for powdery mildew on maples, quince, crabapples, and crapemyrtle.

Watch for aphids and spider mites. They will be very active this year. If your trees are infested with black ants, chances are you have aphids or scale. Keep after the trees you want to show in June [at the Descanso Bonsai Society exhibition, Covid-19 conditions allowing—some CVBS members do this—Editor]. A little work often will save a lot of work later on and the tree will look super. Look for stands and accents. 🌳



Jim Barrett

## CVBS Niche Displays

# Niche Display Program Change

As a transition to more normal times, the niche in last issue was a virtual presentation by Nancy Smeets. This issue we return to our traditional practice of mini exhibition displays on a table in our meeting room with a Jim Barrett-designed forest planting (see page 7).

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

Please note that we have changed how we list niche volunteers (right). April in the table means that I will present the physical niche display at the April 21 meeting, Antonio Viscarra has signed up to present the niche at our June meeting. We need volunteers for May, July, and most of the rest of the year.

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)

April	Marj Branson
May	Volunteer Needed
June	Antonio Viscarra
July	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, a custom-made name badge, and this award-winning newsletter.

Dues for 2022 are now payable (see page 1). 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, or bring it to our next meeting.

—Nancy Smeets

# Ted Matson's Great Bonsai-A-Thon Tour

By Ken Martin with David Whiteside

Future visitors to the Japanese sections of The Huntington Library, Art Collections and Botanical Gardens are in for some big treats: a 350-year-old Japanese farmhouse and a spanking new seven-tree forest bonsai. Those are just two of the highlights from the April 2 – 3, 2022 Golden State Bonsai Federation's annual Bonsai-A-Thon at the Huntington.

We attended the second day, Sunday, when the events included vendor sales, bonsai raffles and auctions, demonstrations, and a delightful tour led by the Huntington's bonsai curator, Ted Matson. About fifty people joined this walking tour of the Japanese features at the Huntington Gardens with emphasis on the bonsai collection.

But before the tour we were treated to closeup views of the spectacular seven-tree foemina juniper forest that Ted and a crew of volunteer helpers put together in February of this year. Originally intended to be a special demonstration at the Bonsai-A-Thon, that plan was scrapped when the event was postponed to April due to the Covid pandemic conditions, too late in the season to transplant these magnificent, old junipers. Happily, the event was videotaped (see Bonsai Online, page 8).

The tour got underway at 11:00 AM. On the way to the Huntington's bonsai and penjing nursery, Ted took us by a 250-year-old tea house. The entire house, which was acquired in the U.S., was disassembled and sent in parts back to Japan for restoration. Then it was shipped—in parts—back here where it was reassembled and now hosts tea ceremonies twice a week at the Huntington.

Next Ted led us through the bonsai display area. There we stopped by a striking bald cypress specimen. Ted said the bottom two-foot stump of this tree was taken from a swamp. It sprouted roots below and branches from the top. One of these branches was selected to produce a continuing tapered trunk and the rest removed. He discussed all the steps used to make a stump into a great bonsai. (See page 5.)

Ted pointed out in the display area the features and “engineering” that went into several of the trees on show. John Naka's foemina forest Goshin III was on display as well as an elm clump by Jim Barrett. (See pages 5 and 6.)

Other significant bonsai on display during our visit included a large Itogawa shimpaku juniper grafted onto a California juniper deadwood base. And a lovely San Jose juniper designed by the late bonsai guru Ben Oki. (See page 6.)

Another highlight of the tour was a newly acquired 350-year-old, 2,000-square-foot Japanese farmhouse that was deconstructed in Japan and accurately reconstructed on Huntington property. The landscaping around it in Japan was meticulously mapped so it will be accurately replicated here. Ted described how this farmhouse was used in Japan—it had been owned by the same family for all its 3 ½ century history—and described the Japanese construction philosophy, which is different than here in the U.S. This new feature should be available for viewing the not-to-distant future. (See page 5.)

We then went to the bonsai and penjing storage area where all the bonsai not on display are stored and worked on. There are roughly 600 bonsai in the Huntington inventory; about 50 of them belong to GSBF. All the trees have been donated, none bought.

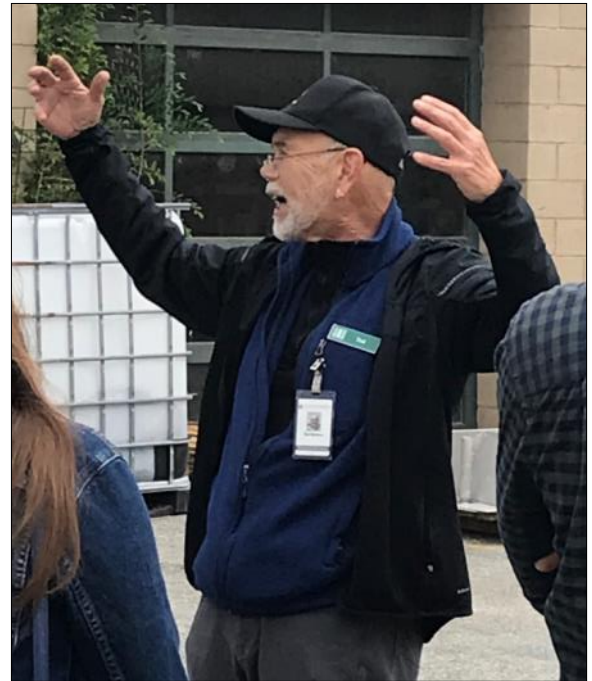
Donated trees that probably will not be displayed are held for three years for donor income tax purposes, then auctioned at a future Bonsai-A-Thon.

Ted has been in charge here for about five years and has made a lot of changes in soil composition, fertilizer, grooming practices, etc.

To fertilize most of its bonsai, the Huntington uses organic fertilizer in teabags. This practice retains the fine sludge in the bag so it doesn't gum up the soil. Obviously, a fair number of dedicated volunteers is required for the maintenance of quality in this collection.

Ted expounded on one tree that had a beautiful large deadwood trunk with abundant movement. Unfortunately, in stark contrast the top with most of the foliage was straight like a broomstick, seriously undermining the bonsai's overall effect. He described a cold-steam technique in which the deadwood and the top were shaped as desired, bringing out the tree's potential as a bonsai. Ted said this tree is now in the class where he would display it in the finest of shows.

Throughout the tour and the group's extended visit to the nursery, Ted clearly explained what we were witnessing. It was a fine outdoor seminar on the art and horticultural practices of bonsai. 🌲



Huntington Gardens' Bonsai Curator Ted Matson (above) explaining what will be seen during his Bonsai-A-Thon tour.

The seven-tree foemina juniper group planting that Ted and his volunteer crew planted that Ted and his volunteer crew created from trees garnered from two group plantings donated to the Huntington collection (below).





Curator Ted Matson explains the origin and development of this stunning bald cypress (above). Originally collected as a stump from a swamp, the bonsai was grown and groomed over many years.

Goshin III, the famous foemina juniper forest created by the late bonsai master John Yoshio Naka (right) was on display for the Bonsai-A-Thon tour.



A 350-year-old Japanese farmhouse is being installed just outside the Huntington's bonsai and penjing nursery (below). Measuring a full 2,000 square feet in living space, the farmhouse was in the same family for 3 1/2 centuries before being acquired by the Huntington. It was shipped from Japan in pieces to be re-assembled here.



**A slanting San Jose juniper bonsai (right), which was created by the late legendary Ben Oki.**



**An elm clump bonsai created by Jim Barrett (left) was on display in the Huntington's upper bonsai court.**



**A shimpaku juniper was grafted to a California juniper (right). All the deadwood trunk is part of the original California juniper base.**



# Five-tree Foemina Juniper Group Planting

**Editor's Note:** Marj Branson presented this Jim Barrett-created group planting of five foemina junipers for our March 17 meeting. Here are some details about this bonsai.

The niche display at our March CVBS meeting was this small forest of foemina junipers (*Juniperus chinensis* 'Foemina'). It was created during a demonstration by bonsai master Jim Barrett in November 2020 (see the January 2021 issue of this newsletter, pages 4 – 5). Program Chair Nancy Smeets had arranged the demonstration for the March 2020 meeting, but it had to be postponed due to the Covid pandemic. Eventually, we decided to have the demonstration in my garage with only a few members present: me, Nancy, and Vice President Mike Blumenberg.

Jim had nine trees available for the forest. He had been trimming and looking after them for two years. In the end, Jim used five of the trees in the forest planting. (David Whiteside bought the remaining four foeminas; he plans to use some in a forest planting of his own.)

The Jim Barrett forest planting is a club bonsai. It will be included in our next year-end holiday auction. Our thanks to Jim Barrett for completing this forest for us.

—Marj Branson

**Jim Barrett's foemina juniper forest (below) evokes a shore-side stand of trees with a rocky coast and light-colored gravel representing the water. Marj Branson provided the lovely companion plant (right).**



Photos by David Williams



# Creating a Coastal Foemina Forest

By Ken Martin

Online Video Review

One great video: Huntington Bonsai Curator Ted Matson creates an awesome forest.

Ted Matson

The Huntington Gardens

San Marino, California

Coastal Grove Planting

17.35 minutes

YouTube address: [2022 Bonsai-A-Thon – Coastal Grove Planting by Ted Matson](#)

This bonsai was put together in February of this year and was on display at the 2022 Bonsai-A-Thon April 2 – 3 at the The Huntington Library, Art Collections and Botanical Gardens. The Huntington had received as two separate donations group plantings containing a total of eleven very large and mature foemina juniper trees (*Juniperus chinensis* 'Foemina'). Ted selected seven of these trees to make a grove planting to emulate a pine forest you might see in coastal Japan. He used tufa stones he had collected over the years as the foundation for a rocky coastal scene. Ted does a good job of explaining each step taken.

When I saw the finished bonsai at the Bonsai-A-Thon (see pages 4 – 6), the leaning of a couple of trees bothered me a bit, but Ted explained that in coastal Japan this would be expected, so these leaning trees add realism. You can see from the photos and the video how large these trees are. 🌲



You can see how large this bonsai is (above). The gravel around the perimeter simulates water. The rocks have undercuts as would be seen near the water.



Ted root pruning the first tree (above).

The finished product (left). I imagine in the future this grove along with John Naka's Goshin III will be two of the main features of The Huntington's bonsai display.

Screen captures by Ken Martin



## 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](http://www.cvbs-bonsai.org).

—Mike Blumenberg

### Book of the Month

*Keep Your Bonsai Alive & Well* by Herb L. Gustafson, published by Sterling Publishing Company in 1995

My olive tree had a serious infestation, and it seems to have happened overnight. The first thing I noticed was a single white fly escaping when I watered the tree. A closer inspection revealed white spots under almost all of the tree's leaves. Using a magnifying glass, I could see the tiny white dots were actually shells or eggs. What to do?

The answer of course was to consult the Conejo Valley Bonsai Society Library and look for an explanation and cure. I turned to *Keep Your Bonsai Alive & Well* by Herb L. Gustafson, published by Sterling Publishing Company in 1995. This book includes a chapter titled "Insects," which describes various pests that commonly plague bonsai. This chapter includes photos of common pests and their impact on trees, including a photo of leaves covered in white spots similar to what I saw on my olive tree leaves.

The author said that white flies will "proliferate at an astounding rate" (which is exactly what I saw on my olive tree) and suck the sap out of a tree if left untreated. Yikes!

The good news, however, is that a white fly infestation is easy to eradicate. The author recommends spraying a mixture of liquid dish detergent and water on the tree at dusk, reapplying every three days for a minimum of two weeks.

I followed this advice and also used a Q-tip and horticultural oil to wipe off all of the white spots. It's now been several weeks, and my olive is alive and well with no trace of reinfestation. Whew!

If you would like to consult any of the CVBS Library books (see the collection listed on our website [www.cvbs-bonsai.org](http://www.cvbs-bonsai.org)), and please contact me, the CVBS Librarian.

—Mike Blumenberg

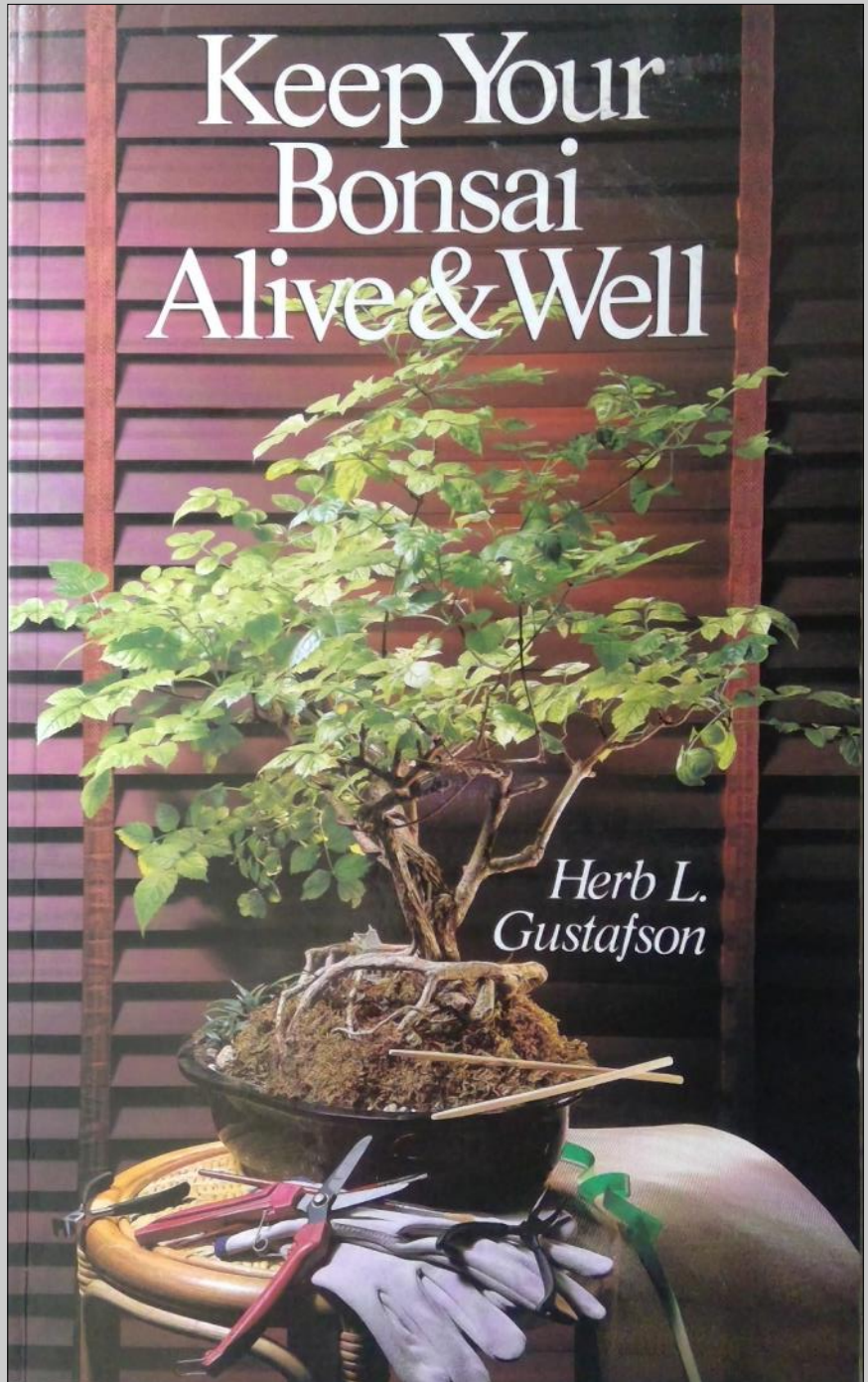


Photo by Mike Blumenberg

## 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**

### April

#### 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 [breadcrust@comcast.net](mailto:breadcrust@comcast.net).



#### April 16, 2022 Santa Cruz, California

Santa Cruz Bonsai Kai Bonsai Sale and Exhibit: The Santa Cruz Bonsai Kai will be having a bonsai sale and exhibit on Saturday, April 16th from 10:00am to 2pm. Please come and check out our sale items and our member's exhibit at the Live Oak Grange Hall, 1900 17th Avenue, Santa Cruz, CA. If you have questions, please contact Robert Potts at [cbobgo@gmail.com](mailto:cbobgo@gmail.com).



#### April 30 – May 1, 2022 Palo Alto, California

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).



### May

#### May 21 – 22, 2022 Oakland, California

Bay Area Satsuki Aikokai (BASA) 25th Annual Satsuki Azalea Bonsai Show, featuring azalea bonsai in full bloom. Join us on May 21 & 22, from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. on Saturday and 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. on Sunday, at 666 Bellevue Ave., Lakeside Park Garden Center, Lake Merritt, for the display of beautiful flowering bonsai. Featuring large member sale and imported Satsuki azalea from Japan. Demonstration from 1 – 3 p.m., Saturday with raffle of the demo tree. Vendor area. Free admission. Public parking available. For information, contact Darren Wong at [sohjuen@aol.com](mailto:sohjuen@aol.com) or visit our website at [www.satsukiazaleabonsai.org](http://www.satsukiazaleabonsai.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.

### October

#### October 7 – 8, 2022 Thousand Oaks, California

Conejo Valley Bonsai Society 19th Annual Exhibition, The Gardens of the World, 2001 Thousand Oaks Boulevard Thousand Oaks, CA 91362. 9:00 AM to 5:00 PM Friday & Saturday. Demonstrations both days. No sales. Admission free. For more information, please email President Marj Branson [president@cvbs-bonsai.org](mailto:president@cvbs-bonsai.org), visit our website [www.cvbs-bonsai.org](http://www.cvbs-bonsai.org) or see The Gardens of the World calendar at [www.gardensoftheworld.info](http://www.gardensoftheworld.info).



### November

#### November 12 – 13, 2022 Oakland, California

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).



**PACIFIC  
BONSAI  
EXPO 2022**