




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

Attention: Deadlines Are Approaching

By Marj Branson

Attention members: the deadline for submitting photos for the 19th Annual Conejo Valley Bonsai Society Exhibition (Virtual) is fast approaching. As already announced, our original plan to exhibit our trees at the Gardens of the World had to be scuttled. So our Annual Exhibition will be a virtual show published in our November newsletter.

By **November 1**, please email digital photographs of up to three bonsai to our newsletter editor, David Whiteside, at cvbs.editor@earthlink.net. Be sure to identify the species of each tree, including both common and scientific names, if you know them.

If possible, set your tree against a plain, light-colored background on a table or bench and on a nice bonsai stand. For the virtual show there is no need to include accent plants.

But do prepare your bonsai for showing by cleaning the pots, clearing debris off the topsoil, and last-minute trimming of any tree that needs sprucing up.

Over the years, one thing I have noticed is that the eye of the camera lens is very sensitive to both the tree and the white space. The silhouette of the tree shows every leaf out of place, so check your tree once through the camera, do an extra trim if necessary, and then take your final picture. Aim your camera about 1/3 of the way up the tree—do not stand above and shoot downward as this distorts the perspective.

Another Deadline

It is time to select the club's officers and supporting committee chairs for 2023. This is a very important CVBS event as it helps keep the club focused on activities and services that club members are interested in.

At our October meeting, nominations chair Damon DuBois will present a slate of officers. At the November meeting, the floor will be open for additional nominations. The vote is by a simple majority of club members in good standing who are present at the

November business meeting or have notified Damon in writing how they wish to vote in advance. The new officers will then appoint next year's committee chairs.



Marj Branson

Damon is contacting members to see how they can help and what roll they wish to fill. The list of officers and committee chairs is on page 2 of this newsletter and below.

Please contact Damon with your thoughts or questions.

CVBS officers are: President, Vice President, Treasurer, and Secretary


The Committees are: Advisor, Membership, Newsletter, Program, Publicity, Refreshments, Librarian, Field Trips and Activities, and Webmaster.

Bonsai or Penjing

Our September discussion topic was Bonsai v. Penjing led by David Whiteside. This is not an easy topic and the distinctions between the two are very subtle. David went through the materials used for both and the various criteria and classifications for both. He also provided a handout that included pictures to help define the differences.

Also, as the new year approaches, we are looking for niche display volunteers in 2023. (See page 3.)

Finally, remember that on December 15 we hold our annual Holiday Potluck, Raffle & Auction. This event is our annual fund raiser. Please support your club by contributing bonsai or bonsai-related items for the raffle and auction. And plan to buy raffle tickets and bid on auction items—bring your checkbook or cash. It's a great opportunity to pick up a few new treats.

See you Thursday, October 20th. 

Contact Us

(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	7:30 PM: Brief Meeting followed by PEER REVIEW/WORKSHOP: BRING YOUR TREES
May 19	7:30 PM: Brief Meeting & Presentation: Fertilizers led by Ken Martin followed by PEER REVIEW/WORKSHOP: BRING YOUR TREES
June 16	7:30 PM: Brief Meeting & Presentation: Pot Selection led by Mike Blumenberg followed by WORKSHOP: BRING YOUR TREES
July 21	7:30 PM: Brief Meeting & Presentation: Air Layering led by Ken Fuentes followed by WORKSHOP: BRING YOUR TREES
August 18	7:30 PM: Brief Meeting & Presentation: Show Preparation led by Marj Branson followed by Workshop and Swap Meet—BRING YOUR TREES AND OTHER ITEMS
September 15	7:30 PM: Brief Meeting & Presentation: Bonsai v. Penjing led by David Whiteside followed by WORKSHOP: BRING YOUR TREES
October 20	7:30 PM: Brief Meeting & Presentation: Selecting a Tree led by Rick Boyer followed by PEER CRITIQUES—BRING YOUR EXHIBITION TREES
November 1	PHOTOS DUE FOR 19TH ANNUAL CVBS EXHIBITION (VIRTUAL) SEND BONSAI PHOTOS FOR INCLUSION IN THE NOVEMBER CVBS NEWSLETTER TO: CVBS.EDITOR@EARTHLINK.NET
November 17	7:30 PM: Brief Meeting with Club Elections & Presentation: Wiring led by Ken Fuentes followed by WORKSHOP: BRING YOUR TREES
December 15	7:30 PM HOLIDAY POTLUCK, RAFFLE & AUCTION

It's Oktoberfest for Black Pines and Junipers

By Jim Barrett

October is a very good month to clean up Japanese black pines and junipers. If you have a black pine bonsai, finish pruning the unwanted new growth leaving one, two, or three new candles on the tips of each branch or twig that was pruned earlier this summer.

How many candles you leave is determined by your design goals for the tree [and] whether the new growth is on the outer limits of the tree or in the interior. Old needles (discolored) should be removed. New or fresh needles should remain until December or January. Leaving these new healthy needles on through the fall should keep the tree at its best. Cutting long needles shorter will allow sunlight to penetrate into the interior of the tree, and help to build stronger growth on the weak and stunted interior candles and twigs.



Jim Barrett

for detail.

You should be able to prune quince, apple, and ume for shape now and place them into their show pot, if this is a practice you follow. Fertilize azaleas and most flowering and fruiting bonsai with a low nitrogen, high phosphorous fertilizer. A 0-10-10 should work well.

Repotting and potting (from nursery container to bonsai pot) can be safely done at this time for black pine and most junipers. Repotting flowering and fruiting bonsai from bonsai pot to bonsai pot can be done, provided the root ball is not drastically disturbed and the tree is reasonably healthy.

Pay attention to watering schedules this month and next. Keeping plants too wet may promote root rot, especially if the tree is not actively growing. Watch for fungus, spider mites, and scale.

October is a very good month to clean up Japanese black pines and junipers.

Junipers may be cleaned of all dead or discolored foliage. Prune the "hanger downers" and the "pointer uppers" unless you plan to wire them into a more horizontal position.

October is also a good time to remove old wire and rewire

2022 - 2023 Refreshments	
Oct.	Rick Boyer
Nov.	Volunteer Needed
Dec.	Holiday Party
Jan. '23	Volunteer Needed

CVBS Niche Displays

Niche Display Program

In the Niche Display Program, club members set up a mini exhibition display. Such a display consists of: the tree in a nice bonsai pot; a display stand; and an accent plant.

All these items are important to create the balance for a good display. We aspire to present the best display possible for everyone's pleasure and edification.

However, it is also our desire to give everyone an opportunity to learn by doing. So if any less experienced member feels their trees are not ready for a finished display, it is worthwhile creating a display that is a work-in-progress. It will be up to the club member to determine which category their display falls into, and then the work-in-progress display can become the talking point of work done, work intended, and suggestions from the floor.

We encourage all members to sign up for the niche display! Please have a look at your 2023 calendar (see the list of current display volunteers at right—2022 is filled) and let us know when you would like to present your display.

—Marj Branson

2022 Niche Displays (Month of meeting)	
Oct.	Ken Martin
Nov.	Ken Fuentes
Dec.	None: Holiday Party
2023	
Jan.	Volunteer Needed
Feb.	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 lifted for now, we have resumed 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 presentations by bonsai experts, workshops, critiques, member swap meets, field trips, a custom-made name badge, 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, or bring it to our next meeting.

—Nancy Smeets

The John Yoshio Naka Memorial Exhibition

By Damon DuBois

My wife Wendy and I had a very enjoyable trip into Los Angeles to see the second John Yoshio Naka Memorial Bonsai Exhibition in Little Tokyo. Presented by the Baikoen Bonsai Club during the second week of Nisei Week August 20 – 21, 2022, the show had a good number of very high-quality bonsai trees on display. Three of them were from Conejo Valley Bonsai Society members Nancy Smeets, Mike Blumenberg, and Bob Pressler!

I took a lot of photos while we were there, but to be honest I don't know that my photos really do the trees justice.

Maybe that's always the case to a degree with bonsai. There is something about the three-dimensionality of bonsai that—at least in my mind—always means they are going to be more impressive, and more beautiful when seen in person.

On the way out of the show, we talked with Ted Matson, bonsai curator at the Huntington Botanical Gardens, who help organize the exhibition. We learned a bit more about the history of the exhibition as well as what they hope to accomplish with future shows. He said it is mainly to share with the

(Continued on page 5)



Bougainvillea (top), Nancy Smeets

Cedar Elm (bottom left), Bob Pressler

Oriental Hornbeam (bottom right), Mike Blumenberg



(Continued from page 4)

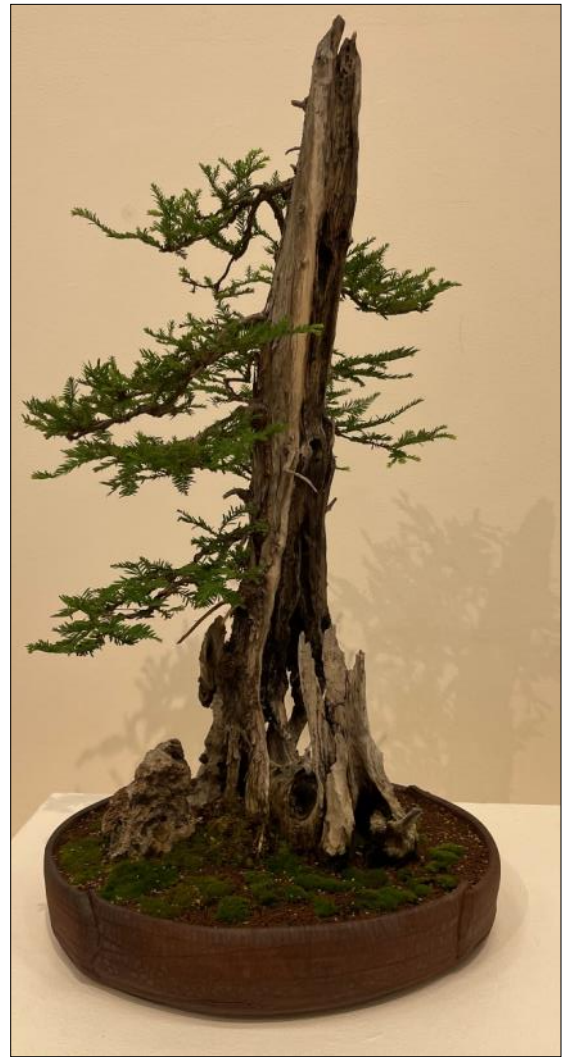
public and with bonsai enthusiasts some of the highest quality trees in Southern California, as well as providing a high-level venue for local talent to show off their creations. He encouraged us to be ambassadors for the show and to spread the word to anyone we know who has high quality trees that might be interested in submitting their trees for next year's exhibition. 🌲

Coastal Redwood (right), Steve Iwaki

Olive (below), Joe Galgoul

Dwarf Variegated Privet (bottom left), Ted Matson

Procumbens Nana Juniper (bottom right), Julian Tsai



Photos continued (next page)

California Juniper (right), Bob Hilvers

Shimpaku Juniper (below left), Tak Shimazu

Star Lavender (below right), Rob King

Japanese Black Pine (bottom left), Jason Chan

Cork Bark Japanese Black Pine (bottom right), Marianne Yamaguchi



Photos continued (page 10)

Neil and Chan on Styling Bonsai Big & Small

By Ken Martin

Online Video Review: All on YouTube

Ryan Neil

Bonsai Mirai

YouTube: How to Trunk Bend a Field Grown Pine

1 hour 48 minutes

When I've attended bonsai events, many times Chris and Lisa Kirk of Hyperion Farms Bonsai in Lyons, Oregon, have been present as bonsai sellers. In September of this year, a major fire destroyed the owner's house, other buildings, field-grown bonsai, essentially their whole business. Ryan Neil from Bonsai Mirai near Portland sent a crew down to Lyons with a U-Haul and rescued 20 previously field-grown trees to bring back to Bonsai Mirai for temporary care. On October 5, Ryan selected a white pine from that collection to demonstrate how to bend a large trunk.

Ryan selected a point fairly low down on the trunk where he had removed two small branches. He removed a wedge that was 1/2 the trunk diameter and about 3/8 inch thick at the edge. This resulted in 1/2 the area of the trunk remaining to transmit water and nutrients at the point of the bend. He wired the trunk to a rebar that was anchored through the root ball. He used an interesting tool to bend the top over until the edges of the cut touched without over stressing the back of the trunk in that area.

He then initially wired and styled the tree. He will leave the rebar and wire on for 12 to 18 months. He has only used this wedge bending technique on pines. He never said this, but it appeared to me this trunk bending moved the top of the tree 2 – 3 inches.



Ryan Neil with the field-grown pine before the operation (top).



The wedge cut in the pine's trunk (middle).



Ryan with the pine after bending the trunk (bottom).

All screen captures on this page by Ken Martin

Jason Chan

Eastern Leaf Nursery

YouTube: How to Style 3 Types of Bonsai for Beginners—No Wrong Way To Do It

~10 minutes

In this almost 10-minute video, Jason goes over styling three similar, very young junipers from growing material into three different styles of bonsai. He discusses how, when working with starter material, there is no wrong way to work on a bonsai. The styling and shape come down to the artist and what they want to do with the tree. His point is a beginner (or anyone) can produce an acceptable small tree in any style they chose. Unlike more mature material, these small trees can be completely wired and then positioned as desired. Jason chose as styles semi-cascade, cascade, and informal upright. 🌲



Jason Chan with three young junipers before styling (left) and with the same trees, now in three different styles: semi-cascade, informal upright, and full cascade (left to right in photo, right).



Foemina Juniper & Ficus in Shohin Display

Editor's Note: I, David Whiteside, provided the niche display at the Conejo Valley Bonsai Society's September 2022 meeting. I showed this shohin display of a foemina juniper and willow-leaf fig. Here are some details about my display.

I have had these two bonsai for very different periods of time and from diverse sources. On the top shelf, I placed the rock planting of what is sometimes called needle junipers (*Juniperus chinensis* 'Foemina'). I acquired these trees from CVBS, which was selling them along with a number of other leftover foemina junipers following a Jim Barrett forest-planting demonstration. (The demonstration was held in November 2020 in Marj Branson's garage due to the Covid-19 pandemic. Marj's article appeared in the January 2021 edition of this newsletter.) I acquired the twin foemina later in 2021 and planted them on this chunk of tufa rock about a year later. Jim had developed these two junipers together in a nursery can, so they already were quasi entwined as you see them here.

The tree on the bottom shelf is a willow leaf fig (*Ficus salicifolia* or *nerifolia* depending on which expert you consult). I developed this tree myself from a root cutting I took off a much, much larger willow leaf ficus when I was moving the larger tree from its nursery can into its first bonsai pot. A 6-foot long taproot yielded a half-dozen cuttings, two of which survive today. I've had this ficus cutting for about 14 years, but it was essentially dormant the first dozen of those years. About two years ago, it woke up and started growing. After a year, I moved it into its current bonsai pot after a consult with CVBS Advisor Ken Fuentes (see the April 2021 edition of this newsletter). Clearly, both bonsai are still in the developmental stage.

The shohin display stand was custom made by local woodworker Shawn Westling. (Although probably not available until the first of next year, Westling Woodworks can be reached at www.-instagram.com/westlingwoodworks/ or email westlingwoodworks@att.net.) The stand was a gift from my sister, brother, and sister-in-law for my 80th birthday last June. The ficus is in a pot made by Seattle-area potter Ann Christiansen, who is my sister.

David Whiteside's needle junipers planted on a piece of tufa rock (top shelf in photo at right).

David's willow leaf fig (bottom shelf in photo at right).

The accent object is an unfinished viewing stone of a volcanic type (bottom shelf in photo at right).



Photo by David Whiteside

CVBS Bonsai Library Open for ‘Business’

Now that the Conejo Valley Bonsai Society is meeting in-person, please 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

“Where Shall I Cut?” by Khan Komai in Volume 9 of *Bonsai in California* (California Bonsai Society, 1975). Out of print.

Where shall I cut? That is a question I belabor too frequently as I study my trees. It’s also the title of an article written by Khan Komai in Volume 9 of *Bonsai in California*, which was published by the California Bonsai Society, Inc. This periodical was published annually from the mid-1960s until 1978 with Volume 9 in 1975.

Khan owned the Komai Bonsai Nursery in Los Angeles. He learned bonsai from his uncle, Frank Nagata, while they were together in the Japanese internment camp in Amache, Colorado, during World War II. Nagata was also one of the five original founders of the California Bonsai Society and founder of Baikoen Bonsai Kenkyukai in Los Angeles.

Komai’s advice in the subject article is to study trees in their natural environment in order to determine where to cut. Discover the natural shape for the specific tree species that you made into a bonsai, then cut to mimic the natural silhouette. He acknowledges that wire is a useful tool to twist and adjust limbs, but notes that a tree’s true beauty lies “in the simple formation of the trunk, the branches, and the twigs.” He includes a quote from the poet Joyce Kilmer that says, “I think that I shall never see a poem as lovely as a tree.” Good advice and a good perspective.

You can check out this and other editions of *Bonsai in California*, as well as a wide variety of other books from the CVBS Library.

—Mike Blumenberg

Cover of Volume 9 of the California Bonsai Society’s *Bonsai in California* (right). This was the magazine’s 1975 edition. It went out of print after 1978.

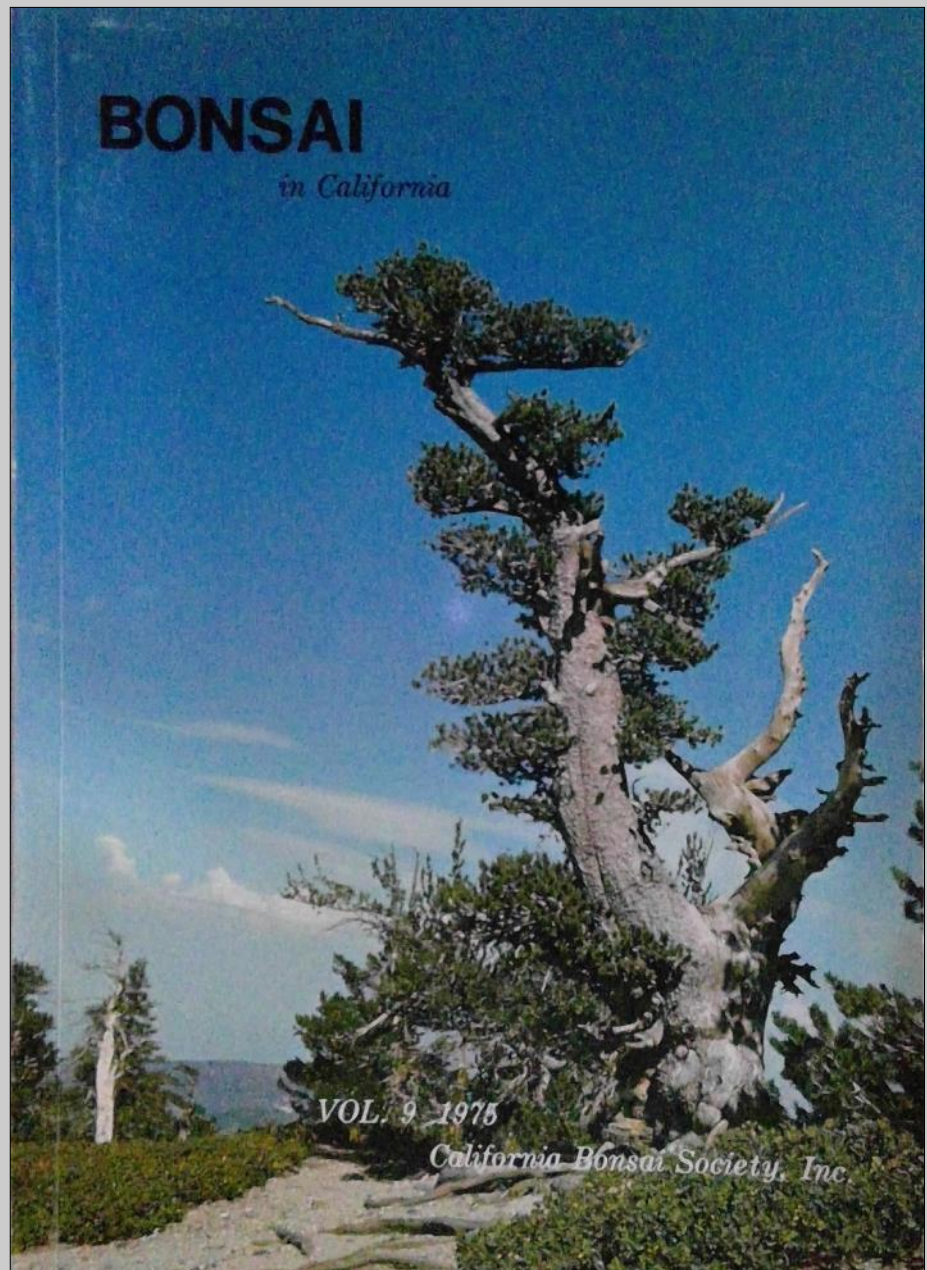


Photo by Mike Blumenberg

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

In-person bonsai events have returned (see below). Most gardens also are open—confirm status and Covid protocols of the garden ahead of time. We also list virtual bonsai events.

2022

October

October 15 & 16, 2022 Sacramento, California

The Capital City Bonsai Association Show will be held at The Shepard Garden and Arts Center (in McKinley Park), 3330 McKinley Blvd. Sacramento, CA 95816. Show hours are 10 AM – 4 PM both days. The show is a benefit to raise funds for the Bonsai Garden at Lake Merritt and will feature trees from: • American Bonsai Association, Sacramento • Bonsai Sekiyu Kai • Sacramento Bonsai Club • Satsuki Aikokai Association. The sale will include established and starter bonsai, pots, tools, etc. Admission is free. Contact Paul Holtzen for more information at pbholtzen@sbcglobal.net.

October 22 & 23, 2022 Union City, California

Yamato Bonsai Kai's 51st Annual Exhibit. 32975 Alvarado-Niles Rd, Union City, CA 94587. Show hours 10:00 AM – 5:00 PM. Demonstrations on both days at 1:30 PM, featuring David Nguy on Saturday and Yamato Bonsai Kai Club demonstrator Howard Correa on Sunday. Demonstration trees will be raffled off as grand prize each day. Exhibition of bonsai trees, plant sales, and vendors. Free admission and free parking. For more info and updates find us on Facebook by searching “Yamato Bonsai Kai.”

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, 210 Burma Road, Oakland, CA 94607, USA. Show hours are 9:00 AM – 5:00 PM. 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 to Pacific Bonsai Expo at www.pacificbonsaiexpo.com.

2023

January

January 21 & 22, 2023 Temple City, CA

Baikoen Bonsai Kenkyukai: 59th Winter Silhouette Show and Sale, Temple City Live Oak Park Community Center, 10144 Bogue Street, Temple City, CA 91780, 10:00 AM to 4:30 PM. Sales and demonstration at 1:00 PM on both days. Deciduous bonsai are featured from club members and invited guests. The Nagata-Komai award will be presented, and there will be a demonstrator at 1:00 PM on both days. There will be a sales area with club and vendor plants, pots, tools and more. For more information, please visit www.baikoenbonsai.com or email Joe Galgoul, joegalgoul@yahoo.com.

January 23, 2023 Zoom

Golden State Bonsai Federation Golden Zoom Series. Sergio Cuan. For Members of GSBF Clubs Only! GSBF Clubs (which includes CVBS) will get the Zoom link to share with their membership for an evening with Sergio Cuan.

Naka Exhibition (continued from page 6)

Japanese Black Pine (far right), Kenji Ikari

Korean Hornbeam (bottom left), Lindsay Shiba

Eastern Red Cedar (bottom center), Bill Stanton

Jade (bottom right), Cheryl Manning

