



conejo valley BONSAI society

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A member of the Golden State Bonsai Federation 

In This Issue

- **President's Message:**
Come to CVBS's Holiday Potluck ... 1
- **CVBS Programs:**
The 2022 Schedule ... 2
- **Barrett's Bonsai Tips:**
Winter Watering Wonder:
Exercise Caution... 3
- **CVBS Refreshments** ... 3
- **CVBS Niche Displays** ... 3
- **CVBS Membership** ... 3
- **CVBS Maintenance Project:**
Root Work and Repotting:
A Pro Bono Job... 4
- **Bonsai Online:**
Man-Made 'Rocks' and Aussie
Bottle Brushes ... 5
- **October Niche:**
Triple-Trunk Boxwood
en el Día de los Muertos ... 6
- **Library/Book of the Month:**
The Little Book of Bonsai
by Jonas Dupuich... 7
- **Coming Events** ... 8

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

Come to CVBS's Holiday Potluck

By Marj Branson

Happy holidays, everyone. And may you all have the best in 2023—in the bonsai world and everywhere.

This month, the Conejo Valley Bonsai Society holds our annual Holiday Potluck, Raffle & Auction. It all happens on our normal meeting night of December 15. Festivities begin at 7:30 PM in our regular space, Westlake Village's Community Room.

Everyone is asked to bring a dish for the buffet: a salad, main course, dessert, or other. Please let me know your choice and how many people will be in your party. Members are encouraged to bring their partner or a friend. This is a social event intended to get to know each other better.

Reminder: The evening's Raffle & Auction is the main fund raiser event for our club. So please come prepared to pick up some bonsai treasures—bring cash or your checkbook.

Included in the auction: the foemina juniper forest created by Jim Barrett. Jim designed and constructed the forest in November 2020, during the Covid period. Because we have not had our annual potluck since then, I have been looking after the forest in my yard. It will now be included in our auction.

Our November 2022 meeting's short talk was presented by Ken Fuentes. His topic was wiring. Ken noted that wiring is one of the bonsai tasks we have to do and do not always think about how we do it.

The question of crossing wires came up. Ken said he tries not to do it but sometimes has to, especially if the tree is in the development stage and is only shown in his garden. Member Shig Hayashi agreed that it's not always possible or necessary to slavishly observe the no-crossed-wires protocol.

Also, the conventional practice of wiring is to start from the bottom of the tree. Sometimes, Ken said, he starts from the top.

He also explained that we should remember that when bending bigger

branches, we should not use the heavy wire to the end of the branch. Rather, he does the detailed wiring to the end of the branch with finer wire.

That means a branch will have two or more sizes of wiring on it, each size partially overlapping the other for stability.

Whatever your wiring practices, when showing a tree there should be no or very little wire on it. And what's there should be unobtrusive, Ken said.

New Year News

At our November meeting, we also created the new CVBS board for 2023. The four officers and all the committee chairs constitute the board. The first step was to elect the officers. They are:

- President: Marj Branson
- Vice President: Damon DuBois
- Treasurer: Ken Fuentes
- Secretary: Ken Martin

These officers were installed automatically at the end of the business meeting. Their first order of business was to appoint standing committee chairs. For the next year, they are:

- Membership: Nancy Smeets
- Editor: David Whiteside
- Program: Nancy Smeets
- Publicity: Marj Branson/Damon DuBois (interim until someone steps forward)
- Refreshments: Damon DuBois
- Librarian: Mike Blumenberg
- Field Trips and Activities: Damon DuBois

Also, Tom McGuire remains webmaster and Ken Fuentes continues in his

(Continued on page 8)



Marj Branson

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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

Winter Watering Wonder: Exercise Caution

By Jim Barrett

One of our concerns, when considering the weather this time of year, is keeping our bonsai properly watered. With the rains, cool weather, and the plants entering a slow growth or dormant period, one is lulled into thinking it is not necessary to worry about watering. On the contrary, we must be extra careful that our bonsai do not dry out completely.

Some of our driest days occur during the winter and, coupled with winds, plants may dry out too much and not show the effects until next spring.

To be sure, some bonsai seem to never dry out enough to require water, but this is not true of all trees, especially those in shallow or very small containers.

Check your trees every day or so, and water only those trees whose soil appears to be dry. The finger-in-the-soil test is the best moisture gauge. If plants are receiving too much water (rain), try tipping the pot about 20 degrees and support this position with an appropriate block or wedge. Water will drain to the low end and run out of the drain holes. This procedure is used in Japan



Jim Barrett

during the rainy season with great success.

Check the thickness of moss; if it seems to be quite thick, remove it. Too-thick moss does not allow the soil to “breathe” properly and may harbor pests. You should also remove any moss creeping up the trunk. A stiff brush is a useful tool for this procedure.

Remember to remove fallen leaves and debris from benches and soil surfaces. Remove any remaining leaves from deciduous trees except hornbeam. It won't hurt to remove hornbeam leaves, but since they remain on the tree after they turn brown, you may want to enjoy them.

If you do have deciduous trees, now through January is the best time to prune or remove heavy, unsightly top branches that have grown

(Continued on page 8)

2022 – 2023 Refreshments

Dec.	Holiday Potluck
Jan. '23	Mary Welz
Feb. '23	Antonio Viscarra
Mar. '23	Nancy Smeets

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 2023 already has some scheduled) and let us know when you would like to present your display.

—Marj Branson

2022 Niche Displays

(Month of meeting)

Dec.	None: Holiday Party
2023	
Jan.	Nancy Smeets
Feb.	Mike Blumenberg
March	Dick Winston
April	Marj Branson

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

Root Work and Repotting: A Pro Bono Job

By Marj Branson

The Gardens of the World has been a long-time supporter of the Conejo Valley Bonsai Society. Setting aside a break due to Covid, CVBS has regularly held our annual fall exhibition in their resource center.

The late Nat Stein—one of our club's original members—was a docent at the Gardens when it first opened in 2002. He introduced us, and we have had a good relationship with them ever since.

Of special interest to CVBS members, the Gardens has two bonsai trees. One is an elm tree, which belonged to Nat Stein. When Nat died, the club purchased the tree from his wife Else and donated it to the Gardens in his memory.

The Gardens also has a black pine bonsai, which a patron donated. CVBS looks after both of these bonsai for the Gardens.

On Friday, November 18, I picked up the black pine bonsai from the Gardens. The next day, CVBS member Rick Boyer came to my home to help me work on the pine. It had been many years since the tree was repotted, and it was beginning to lean forward in its pot, so we focused on those two issues.

Unsurprisingly, we found that the tree was severely rootbound, so we reduced the size of the root ball. When we replaced the pine in the pot, we straightened its position to make it more upright.

The photos on this page show Rick and me working on the tree. We wired the tree into the pot securely and put fresh soil around it. Afterward, we returned it to the Gardens. I have checked on it once since then and am happy to report the tree now is a happy camper!

But we are not finished with this black pine. The next session with the tree will be to wire its branches to restore it to the intended style.

The Gardens of the World in Thousand Oaks is a great place to have a morning stroll. It is conveniently located and while visiting, I highly recommend that CVBS members check up on the two bonsai we maintain for the Gardens. 🌲



The black pine at home in the Gardens of the World in Thousand Oaks (top right).

Rick Boyer working on the root ball (below left). Note how pot-bound the old roots appear.

Marj Branson with the black pine in her backyard (right) where she and Rick did the work.



Photos by Marj Branson & Rick Boyer



Man-Made 'Rocks' and Aussie Bottle Brushes

By Ken Martin

Online Video Review: All on YouTube

Ryan Neil

Bonsai Mirai

YouTube: Nursery Stock Rock Planting

65 minutes

In this YouTube video, Ryan Neil, owner of Bonsai Mirai near Portland, Oregon, performs a planting on two man-made resin "rocks." He said there are a couple of types of rock plantings. One is where the rock is the primary feature and the plants secondary. The other type is where the trees dominate the incidental rock.

For this demonstration, the rocks were the primary feature, and the five air-layered trees were there to show how difficult it is to grow in a severe mountain environment.

He first test-positioned the trees in various places and angles to see which arrangement he liked best. He then spent quite a bit of time anchoring the rocks into the pot. He drilled holes in the tray and the rocks, then used rubber pads, wood, and bamboo strips to isolate the rocks from the pot.

When preparing the roots on the trees, he tended to keep the longer roots so they would eventually grow down to the tray. One feature he wanted to promote was to minimize width of the root paths from the trees to the tray.

He said it is important not to style the trees before attaching them to the rocks. In fact, he said to wait until sometime in the future to do the styling.

You can see from the after picture (right) that he will have a styling session in a couple of years. What needs to happen first is for the roots to grow down into the tray. Meanwhile, aftercare focused on keeping the trees moist is critical.



Ryan Neil with man-made resin 'rocks' (top right).

Ryan with rock planting (bottom right). Note that the trees have not been styled.

All screen captures on this page by Ken Martin

Sam Duecke

The Aussie Bonsai Bloke

YouTube: Australian Native Bonsai Gets a Trim after Flowering and a New Pot.

13 minutes

I thought for a change I'd skip on down to Australia to see how they work with their native trees.

Sam Duecke, aka "The Aussie Bonsai Bloke," tackles a bottle brush (probably *Callistemon citrinus*, although some authorities classify the bottle brush tree as *Melaleuca citrina*). He trims it and repots it, all the time explaining what he was doing and why. There appeared to be a resonance in his audio system when he was working on the tree, which made it hard for me to understand (compounded by the vast difference in pronunciation between the Australian and American dialects of English). The resonance went away when he went back to the camera and talked.

What is interesting to me is the fact that a bottle brush makes a fairly decent bonsai. 🌿



Sam Duecke with the bottle brush tree before styling (left) and after (right). Note that the styled tree sits in a new bonsai pot.



Triple-Trunk Boxwood en el Día de los Muertos

Editor's Note: Ken Martin provided the niche display at the Conejo Valley Bonsai Society's October 2022 meeting. He showed this large Japanese boxwood styled after a three-trunk oak tree. Here are some details about his display.

I bought this Japanese boxwood (*Buxus microphylla japonica*) at Wholesale Nursery in December 2016. It had been in one place so long that a huge root went out the pot bottom and had to be cut off.

I did very little to it at the time as it had three trunks split above the nebari, which is supposed to be not good. But when Cesareo Perez did a demo for CVBS in 2018, he worked on a multiple-trunk tree and said oaks frequently have multiple trunks. So I got to thinking this tree could be a triple-trunk oak.

In 2019 I started working on this tree: I cut 2/3 of the roots and put it in a smaller plastic pot and did some pruning. In 2020 I sought Ken Fuente's advice. He had some good ideas, and we went back and forth with our ideas summarized in an article in the CVBS December 2020 newsletter (pages 4 – 5). His drawing on a photograph of the tree really helped me visualize his ideas; that photo was included with his article two years ago about my boxwood. He suggested an oval pot, which I like.

The tree as it now sits is very much a work in progress. It needs several years of leaf pad development (growth). The jin on the right is the result of this former branch not having enough foliage to keep it living. It can probably be removed.

—Ken Martin

Ken Martin's Japanese boxwood (below) is styled to emulate a three-trunk oak. The accent object is a reference to Día de los Muertos.



CVBS Bonsai Library Open for ‘Business’

Please remember to return any overdue items borrowed from the Conejo Valley Bonsai Society library. But also 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

The Little Book of Bonsai by Jonas Dupuich (Ten Speed Press, Emeryville, California, January 2020), 112 pages.

We got a new book!

This month’s Book of the Month is *The Little Book of Bonsai* by Jonas Dupuich, an award-winning bonsai artist from Alameda, California. He manages “Bonsai Tonight,” a popular bonsai website and weekly email with bonsai news and tips. While we have a few other library books written for beginners and offering a comprehensive overview of creating and caring for bonsai, this “Little Book” stands out with succinct yet informative prose, excellent photography, and good referencing to tie it all together.

For example, I read Dupuich’s guidance on wiring as a follow up to our discussion on the same topic at the November 2022 meeting (see President’s Message, page 1). Much of our discussion was consistent with Dupuich’s guidance, such as the preference for aluminum wire versus copper on smaller branches because it is cheaper and easier to work with.

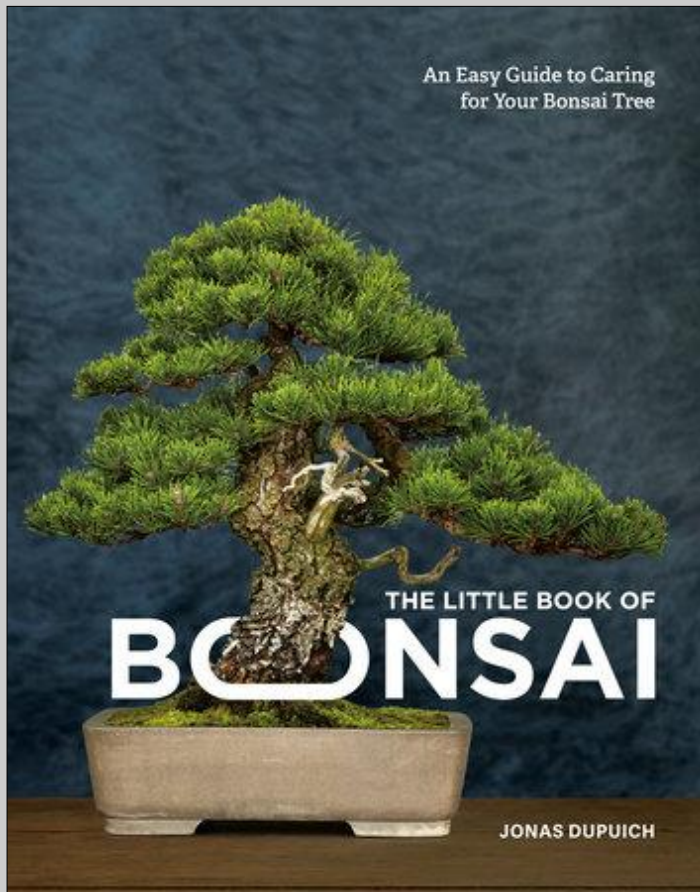
Dupuich provides additional guidance that I hadn’t heard before (or possibly forgot), such as explaining why he thinks we shouldn’t cross wires. (Answer: because the top wire can put additional pressure on the lower wire and increase the risk of scarring the bark.) He does a great job of referencing photos in the book to illustrate a point. Here are a couple of examples.

The picture on the left below illustrates the proper angle to apply wire to a branch. Dupuich recommends applying wire at angles between 55° and 60° (break out your protractor). He then uses the photo to illustrate wiring that is too steep, too shallow, and just right (in the middle).

The picture on the right below illustrates proper hand positions to hold a branch while wiring. You can review his advice on wiring and many other aspects of bonsai by checking out this book from our library.

Thanks, Ken Martin, for the donation to the CVBS library!

—Mike Blumenberg



Photos by Mike Blumenberg. Cover from Ten Speed Press.



Cover of *The Little Book of Bonsai* (above right).

Two wrongs and one right: the middle wired branch (in the photo to the left) shows what Dupuich says is the right way to do it.

It is important to grasp the branch being wired to properly support the procedure (right).



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.

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 the Conejo Valley Bonsai Society) will get the Zoom link to share with their membership for an evening with Sergio Cuan.

February

February 3 – 5, 2023 Santa Nella, California

California Shohin Society 18th Biennial Shohin Seminar, Hotel Mission de Oro Conference Center, 13070 CA-33, Santa Nella, California 95322. Every two years the California Shohin Society organizes a Shohin Seminar, where bonsai masters, teachers, students, and general enthusiasts from all over the country gather to learn and share their love of shohin bonsai. Schedule: Friday 10:00 AM – 8:30 PM; Saturday: 8:00 AM – 10:00 PM including Dinner Buffet, Benefit Drawing & Auction; Sunday: 8:00 AM – 12:00 Noon. Demonstrations, vendor sales, and workshops. All workshops are on Saturday: Session A: 9:00 AM – 11:45 AM; Session B: 2:00 PM – 4:45 PM. All workshops are by lottery. For more information and registration, please visit California Shohin Society website at www.calshohin.org.

February 18 – 19, 2023 Oakland, California

Golden State Bonsai Federation Annual Mammoth Auction & Sale 2023 at Oakland, Lakeside Park Garden Center, 666 Bellevue Avenue, Oakland, CA 94610. All proceeds support the GSBF Bonsai Garden at Lake Merritt, Oakland, California.

February 25 – 26, 2023 San Marino, California

Golden State Bonsai Federation Bonsai-A-Thon at the Huntington Library, Art Museum, and Botanical Gardens, 1151 Oxford Road, San Marino, California 91108. GSBF has announced new dates (NOTE: changed since the November issue of this newsletter), details to follow. Watch this space for more information as it is released.

April

April 8 – 9, 2023 Sacramento, California

American Bonsai Association, Sacramento (ABAS) 63rd Annual Spring Bonsai & Suiseki Show and Sale at 3330 McKinley Blvd, Sacramento, CA 95816. The show will feature headliner, Todd Schlafer of First Branch Bonsai. Demonstrations will take place both Saturday and Sunday at 1:30 PM. In addition to our quality exhibition, there will be a large vendor area and consignment sales area! A daily benefit raffle will include each day's demonstration trees and many more bonsai and bonsai related items. A beginners workshop will be offered Saturday morning. For more information, check out abasbonsai.org or call Dodie Newman at 916-799-9575 Phone: (+1) 916-801-4424

Barrett's Bonsai Tips (Continued from page 3)

unnoticed during the year. Thin out or redirect primary branch terminal twigs. Cutting back to a secondary branch quite often is necessary to create new terminals that enhance the tree's design. Most maple secondary and tertiary branches are flexible at this time of year and can be wired and moved to fill or open a space.

Use this time to fine tune your deciduous trees.

A side benefit of winter pruning is it creates the opportunity to make old wood cuttings. Many times old branches must be removed. Rather than throwing them away, try sticking them [in soil] as you would any cutting. If they grow, you have the makings of a good shohin material that may be several years old already.

Don't forget to pull or trim old needles on black pines.

Trim junipers to maintain their shape. Use dormant spray on all deciduous trees, Volck oil on evergreen and deciduous trees.

Repotting Japanese black pines and all junipers may be done next month. January and February are also great

times for potting from nursery container to bonsai pot. I mention the January/February reminder to get you thinking about soil components, pots, and other supplies you should have ready before the time comes.

Have a great holiday season. 🌲

President's Message (Continued from page 1)

role as CVBS advisor.

Note that there are some changes in the officer/committee chair lineup. Also note that some board members are serving double or triple duty. Damon DuBois and Nancy Smeets in particular are wearing many hats. Please consider volunteering to fill one of those chairs.

With the new year, your thoughts on club activities would be very much appreciated. Please email me or any board member (see page 2 for contact info).

Enjoy your holidays and see you at the potluck. If you have not yet signed up, please let me know how many are coming and what dish you plan to bring.

See you Thursday evening, December 15th. 🌲