



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

Talks, Trips, Workshops & Demos

By Marj Branson

The Conejo Valley Bonsai Society is developing an exciting schedule of workshops, member-led discussions, field trips, and demonstrations. Both Program Chair Nancy Smeets and Field Trip Chair Damon DuBois are busy lining up activities and working out details.

At our March meeting, Ken Martin will lead a five-minute discussion of how to wire bonsai into a pot. Some other scheduled topics include fertilizers (time of year, types of trees, amount) and bugs, fungi, and preventive maintenance. Farther down the calendar, we are looking for topics and volunteer leaders for our monthly discussions. Please let me know your interests and what we should add to the list.

Meanwhile, Damon has arranged with Huntington Gardens Bonsai Curator Ted Matson an April 22 behind-the-scenes tour of the Huntington's bonsai collection. (See pages 2 and 8 for more information.) And Nancy is working out details of two demonstrations, possibly including one on kusamono, the Japanese botanical art of potted wild grasses and flowers. Watch this space and the CVBS Program Calendar on page 2 for more information as Damon and Nancy work out the details.

As part of our practice of monthly short discussions, I led off our February meeting with some thoughts on how to trim junipers. I brought in several juniper species for the demonstration. It is important to know when to trim and when to pinch. We all had a good discussion.

Bonsai-A-Thon Report

The Golden State Bonsai Federation's February 25 – 26 Bosai-A-Thon at the Huntington Library, Art Museum,



Marj Branson

and Botanical Gardens was a success, despite bad weather. All the activities and vendor booths scheduled to be outside had to be moved inside. The Huntington closed their gardens (their galleries were open). Instead of the usual mixture of bonsai people and Huntington visitors, we had mostly bonsai enthusiasts.

But the place was full. At times the vendor area was so

crowded it was almost impossible to walk through. Some of the auction trees were culled from the Huntington's collection, including those that were used in demonstrations. There were three demonstrators both Saturday and Sunday, and most of the chairs for the audience were occupied.

Everyone seemed to have a good time, catching up with old friends and finding new treasurers! The tradition will carry on in 2024.

Dues Are Due

If you have not yet paid your annual CVBS dues, please bring them to our March meeting or send a check to me (see page 3 for details).

The March 4 potting workshop at Rick Boyer's nursery was a big success with a half-dozen CVBS members participating. Another Saturday nursery workshop has already been scheduled, for May 6. (See pages 2 and 7.)

CVBS honorary member Ann Lofquist, who now lives on the East Coast, has started making and selling bonsai pots. Her Etsy store is called AkimiBonsaiPots and if you are interested they are available at www.etsy.com/shop/AkimiBonsaiPots. They are beautiful—check them out.

See you Thursday, March 16. 🌳

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(Click on Email Address)

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CVBS Programs 2023

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

January 19	7:30 PM: Brief Meeting followed by Workshop— BRING YOUR TREES
February 16	7:30 PM: Brief Meeting & Presentation: Trimming junipers led by Marj Branson followed by Workshop— BRING YOUR TREES
SATURDAY March 4	1:00 – 4:00 PM: Workshop on Potting Ventura County Nursery, 4595 Balcom Canyon Road, Somis BRING YOUR TREES (CLUB WILL SPONSOR SOIL)
March 16	7:30 PM: Brief Meeting & Presentation: Wiring a tree into the pot led by Ken Martin followed by Workshop— BRING YOUR TREES
April 20	7:30 PM: Brief Meeting & Presentation: Bugs & Fungi led by TBA followed by Workshop— BRING YOUR TREES
SATURDAY APRIL 22	10:00 AM – Noon Behind-the-scenes tour of the Huntington's bonsai nursery led by Ted Matson, bonsai curator The Huntington Library, Art Museum & Botanical Gardens San Marino, California
SATURDAY May 6	1:00 – 4:00 PM: Workshop: Bring Your Own Trees Ventura County Nursery, 4595 Balcom Canyon Road, Somis BRING YOUR TREES
May 18	7:30 PM: Brief Meeting & Presentation: Fertilizers led by Ken Martin followed by Workshop— BRING YOUR TREES
June 15	7:30 PM: Brief Meeting followed by DEMONSTRATION —TBA
July 20	7:30 PM: Brief Meeting & Presentation: Cleaning pots and show preparation led by Marj Branson followed by Workshop— BRING YOUR TREES
August 17	7:30 PM: Brief Meeting followed by Workshop and Swap Meet — BRING YOUR TREES AND OTHER ITEMS
September 21	7:30 PM: Brief Meeting followed by PEER CRITIQUES — BRING YOUR EXHIBITION TREES
October TBA	TENTATIVE 20TH ANNUAL CVBS EXHIBITION GARDENS OF THE WORLD
October 19	7:30 PM: Brief followed by DEMONSTRATION —TBA
November 16	7:30 PM: Brief Meeting with Club Elections followed by Workshop— BRING YOUR TREES
December 21	7:30 PM HOLIDAY POTLUCK, RAFFLE & AUCTION

Let New Growth Harden before Repotting

By 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



Jim Barrett

• 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

(Continued on page 8)

Refreshments

March	Nancy Smeets
April	Mike Blumenberg
May	Marj Branson
June	Ken Martin

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 calendar (see the list of current display volunteers at right—2023 already has some scheduled) and let us know when you would like to present your display.

—Marj Branson

Niche Displays

March	Marj Branson
April	David Whiteside
May	Volunteer Needed
June	Mike Blumenberg
July	Antonio Viscarra
August	Nancy Smeets

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, 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

Cheap Shohin plus Japanese Aesthetics

By Ken Martin

Online Video Review: This month I decided to feature two of my favorite American bonsai artists. One demonstrates how to make a cheap shohin bonsai, the other discusses the evolution of Japanese aesthetics.

Ryan Neil

Bonsai Mirai

YouTube: How to Turn Nursery Stock into a Shohin Bonsai Creation

25:34 minutes

Ryan Neil takes an inexpensive nursery juniper just repotted up into a one-gallon can and converts it into a shohin size bonsai. When selecting this plant, he looked for one with twists and turns in the trunk and a lot of branches down low. He initially was thinking literati but then decided on a shohin with the longer branches jinned. This demo shows us we can take a cheap plant from a nursery and make an acceptable pre-bonsai.



Ryan Neil with a juniper in 1-gallon nursery can (above) before styling it.



Ryan with the same juniper (above) styled as a shohin pre-bonsai.

Bjorn BJORHOLM

Bonsai-U

Eisei-en Bonsai

You Tube: How Japanese Aesthetics Influence Bonsai Art

18 minutes

Bjorn BJORHOLM spent about six years in Japan learning from a bonsai master. Here in his favorite city of Kyoto he gives a tutorial on the historical evolution of the definition of beauty in Japan and how it relates to bonsai. This video doesn't address bonsai specifically but sets the background for this in following talks.

Bjorn BJORHOLM on a bridge in Kyoto talking about the evolution of Japanese aesthetic principles.



All screen captures by Ken Martin

Cork Oak Ready for Second Repotting

Editor's Note: Mike Blumenberg provided the niche display at the Conejo Valley Bonsai Society's February 2023 meeting. He showed this cork oak on a traditional display stand and an accent plant. Here are some details about Mike's display.

I purchased my cork oak from Muranaka Bonsai Nursery in Nipomo, California, in June of 2018 for \$36. It was in a 5-gallon nursery can when purchased. I moved it into a bonsai pot in February 2019 and repotted it again in February 2021. I plan to repot again this winter so I can adjust the location in the pot.

—Mike Blumenberg

Mike Blumenberg's cork oak (below) originated from Muranaka Bonsai Nursery in Nipomo, California.



Photo by David Whiteside

CVBS Bonsai Library Grows: A New Book

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

“Styling and Detail Work of a Collected Juniper” by Todd Schlafer (Bonsai Club of Santa Barbara and Conejo Valley Bonsai Society, July 2021).

This issue’s Book of the Month is a DVD titled “Styling and Detail Work of a Collected Juniper.” It features Todd Schlafer of First Branch Bonsai. The DVD is a recording from Todd’s presentation to the Bonsai Club of Santa Barbara and the Conejo Valley Bonsai Society on July 8, 2021, during the height of the Covid-19 pandemic. Since we weren’t meeting in person, both clubs agreed to co-sponsor a short series of demonstrations via Zoom.

In this video, Todd starts with a mature but relatively untamed juniper that had been collected from the wild several years earlier. During this demonstration, he walks us through a previous video that he developed to document how he styled this tree. The resultant discussion and narration of another video is well done and provides even greater insight into the styling process, including cleaning dead and live wood, wiring and bending branches, wiring and fertilizing. It is an informational discussion that you can check out from the CVBS Library.

—Mike Blumenberg



Two bonsai clubs co-sponsored Todd Schlafer’s demonstration which was “broadcast” via Zoom and then turned into a DVD (above).

Photo by Mike Blumenberg

Big Success: Saturday Potting Workshop

CVBS's Saturday, March 4, repotting workshop at the Ventura County Nursery was a big success. A half-dozen club members participated: Rick Boyer, Marj Branson, Mike Blumenberg, Ken Fuentes, Arbi Baghdanian, and Nancy Smeets.

The club provided the potting mix. Some soil ingredients were acquired from The West America Trading Company at the GSBF Bonsai-A-Thon. Rick took these inorganic materials back to the nursery. He also picked up a bag of cactus mix, which we combined with the inorganic ingredients. Some members added their own fertilizer.

Although the morning was cool and overcast, the afternoon was perfect for a good work day. We all brought trees that needed repotting and worked on them. It was very helpful when working on a large tree to have an extra set of hands. This worked very well and we all got a lot of work done.

Our next nursery workshop will be May 6, 2023. See page 2 for the details.

—Marj Branson

Photos by Arbi Baghdanian

CVBS members (clockwise from front right in photo below) Nancy Smeets, Marj Branson, Ken Fuentes, Mike Blumenberg, and host Rick Boyer (partially hidden behind the tree).

Inset: Photographer Arbi Baghdanian's selfie.



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.

2023

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 www.abasbonsai.org or call Dodie Newman at 916-799-9575.

August

August 26 – 27, 2023 Rohnert Park, California

Redwood Empire Bonsai Society 37th Annual Bonsai Show at Rohnert Park Community Center, 5401 Snyder Lane, Rohnert Park, California. Saturday from 10:00 AM to 5:00 PM. Sunday from 10:00 AM to 4:00 PM. Featuring the internationally renowned bonsai artist Ryan Neil as guest demonstrator. Ryan is the creator and owner of Bonsai Mirai and Mirai Live. Ryan workshops both mornings from 9:00 AM – Noon. Enrollment is limited. Ryan critique of the show trees from 5:30 – 6:30 PM on Saturday. Contact Bob Shimon (shimon@mcn.org) regarding cost and for enrollment. Demonstrations and raffles at 1:00 PM both days. Visit the REBS website for more information: www.rebsbonsai.org.

October

October 20 – 22, 2023, Santa Nella, California

Golden State Bonsai Federation Rendezvous at Santa Nella, 13070 CA-33, Santa Nella, CA 95322. October 20, 10:00 AM PDT – October 22, 4:00 PM PDT. • Bonsai Sales • Auction • Workshops • Lectures • Community. Very little information is available at this time. We will publish more as it's made available. Please visit www.gsbfbonsai.org.

October 21 – 22, 2023, Sacramento, California

Capital City Bonsai Show, October 21, 10:00 AM – October 22, 3:00 PM. 3330 McKinley Blvd, Sacramento, CA 95816. This group show features tree and suiseki displays from participating area clubs. This is all the information available at this time. Watch this space for details as they are released. Please visit www.abasbonsai.org.

CVBS Field Trip

Behind the Scenes Tour of the Huntington Bonsai Collection

By Damon DuBois

The Conejo Valley Bonsai Society's Field Trips committee has arranged for a private, behind-the-scenes tour guided by Ted Matson of the massive bonsai collection at the Huntington Library, Art Museum & Botanical Gardens. The tour will include the workshop areas where trees are maintained or prepared for exhibit.

We will spend some time in the courts, but most of the time will be in the nursery where our group will see all the trees that are not on display. That will include many of the larger trees that are rarely shown because of their size. During the tour, Ted will highlight and talk about some select bonsai, and our group will be free to ask questions and explore other areas.

The bonsai nursery and work area is also next to the 320-year-old Shoya House, so our group will get to see that as well.

The tour will not include general access to the Huntington. (Individuals who want to make separate reservations as Huntington Gardens members or visitors may do so on their own. Note that the Huntington requires advanced reservations for weekend visits.)

The tentative date is April 22, 2023, and will be from 10:00 AM – 12:00 Noon, pending confirmation and a final count of club members who wish to attend. There will be an opportunity to sign up at the March CVBS meeting. 🌳

The 320-year-old Shoya House (below).



Barrett's Bonsai Tips (Continued from page 3)
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 muriatic 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. 🌳