




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

There's Plenty To Do with CVBS

By Marj Branson

This year is shaping up pretty active for members of the Conejo Valley Bonsai Society. That's thanks in large part to Field Trips Chair Damon DuBois and Program Chair Nancy Smeets.

For our June 15 meeting, Nancy has arranged for Peter Macasieb, who specializes in shohin (small) bonsai, to do a demonstration.

Our August 17 meeting will feature a demonstration/participatory workshop by Debra Mauz-Melitz. Nancy has arranged for Debra to give us hands-on experience creating bonsai in hypertufa pots that she will make for this event.

Based on a showing of member interest, Debra will bring 10 pots and plants for members to use in a class format. Ten members who sign up in advance will go home with their creations.




Marj Branson

Hypertufa pots are becoming popular at bonsai exhibitions, some of which now include small hypertufa display areas. These pots come in all sizes and forms, including some small enough for accent plants for bonsai.

The member-led discussion topic at our May 18 CVBS meeting will be fertilizers and will be led by Ken Martin. The discussion will be followed by a member workshop, so bring your trees!

Earlier this spring, at our April meeting Ken Fuentes lead the evening off with a discussion about bugs and fungi. Ken found his best success was to go out and check his trees in the evening with a flashlight when the bugs come out. He then sees which bugs he is dealing with and treats his trees accordingly. Several members brought up their tree problems, which attendees then discussed.

See you Thursday, May 18th! 

GSBF Event

Annual Bonsai Rendezvous Filling Up

If you're planning to go to the 2023 Bonsai Rendezvous in October at Santa Nella, you'll want to register as soon as possible. Most of the workshops at this point are sold out or are close to selling out.

The rooms at the Hotel Mission de Oro are also close to being booked up for that weekend. The last I heard there were only 20 rooms left. So, if you're planning to go and would like to take workshops or stay at the Hotel Mission de Oro, you'll want to act fast. (See event listing on page 8 for the website link.)

Of course if you miss the opportunity to sign up for workshops there still will be a lot of learning seminars, auctions, vendors, and other events that are open to all. People who aren't registered for workshops will also be able to sit in on them as silent observers. There may be additional workshops added to the schedule due to the unexpectedly high demand, and if there are I'll let everyone know a bit ahead of time.

The GSBF will also be advertising additional spots in workshops before they are made available, so everyone gets a fair shot at them.

—Damon DuBois

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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 Ken Fuentes 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 —PETER MACASIEB
July 20	7:30 PM: Brief Meeting & Presentation: Cleaning pots and show preparation led by Marj Branson followed by Workshop and Swap Meet — BRING YOUR TREES AND OTHER ITEMS
August 17	7:30 PM: Brief Meeting followed by DEMONSTRATION —DEBRA MAUZ-MELITZ
September 21	TENTATIVE 7:30 PM: Brief Meeting followed by PEER CRITIQUES — BRING YOUR EXHIBITION TREES
October TBA	TENTATIVE 20TH ANNUAL CVBS EXHIBITION VENUE TBA
October 19	7:30 PM: Brief Meeting 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

A Few Species Can Be Potted or Repotted

By Jim Barrett

Satsuki azaleas should be nearly through blooming this month. If your azalea has an established shape, now is a good time to clean out extra and unwanted growth. Trim for form and style.

Make sure all seed pods are removed as soon as possible. Leaving the seed pods to mature tends to weaken the tree and new growth is likely to be weak. Repotting of azaleas can be done now. It might be wise to wait to move your azaleas from nursery containers to bonsai pots until next spring.

Pomegranates and olives may be potted from nursery containers to bonsai pots during June and early July. Protect any newly potted plants from direct sun for a week or so. Black pines should have had their candles pruned by the end of this month and certainly by the middle of July.

Deciduous trees such as elms, Japanese and trident maples, liquidambar, etc. should have slowed down by now. Trim all new twigs to one or two sets of leaves. Pay attention to the way new buds point and trim for direction. Established bonsai should be developing the ramification needed to create the illusion of a mature tree. Remember that most deciduous trees in nature develop soft outlines and rounded apices. Trim accordingly.

Fertilize trees that develop flower buds in early summer, such as crab apple, quince, ume (Japanese apricot), and



Jim Barrett

wisteria with a low nitrogen, rich phosphate fertilizer. Repeat throughout the summer at least two more times.

Powdery mildew is already showing up on maples, crapemyrtle, and quince. Spray with Benomyl or a good fungicide that is recommended for mildew.

Pine tip moth has been active again. The grub eats the center of new pine candles. If your black pine candles turn brown at the very tip, chances are that pine tip moth grubs are active. Pick off the brown end and inspect the inside. You should find the grub, a pupae, or the pupae case. Destroy the critter and dispose of

the candle tip. Since this grub lives inside the candle, only a systemic poison would be effective. Cygon-2, Borer Control, or a systemic rose insecticide in granular form might work.

Pay special attention to water schedules. Gloomy May days can be deceiving when it comes to watering needs of our plants. 🌱

Refreshments	
May	Marj Branson
June	Ken Martin
July	Nancy Smeets
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 2023 display volunteers at right) and let us know when you would like to present your display.

—Marj Branson

Niche Displays	
May	Mike Blumenberg
June	Antonio Viscarra
July	Nancy Smeets
August	Volunteer Needed
Sept.	Volunteer Needed
Oct.	Volunteer Needed

CVBS Membership

Interested in CVBS?

Please join me in welcoming Kimberly Atkins to the Conejo Valley Bonsai Society, which 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

Two Flawed Trees with Some Promise

By Ken Martin

Online Video Review: For this month, I reviewed two very different videos. First, Jason Chan demonstrates how to make a nice bonsai on the cheap. Second, Ryan Neil tackles a large azalea with some serious flaws.

Jason Chan

Eastern Leaf Bonsai

Chino, California

YouTube: How to Make a Twin Trunk Bonsai Tree for Beginners

14 Minutes

Jason Chan, Owner of Eastern Leaf Bonsai, has been a demonstrator at our club several times in the past. In this video, he works on a tree from his nursery. He says, “This tree was a little bit neglected and sitting in the corner. Although the tree has some undesirable qualities for a traditional informal upright arrangement, the tree has enough character to create another style.” He discusses the possible options and goes over his thought process while he styles the tree.

The reason I reviewed and selected this video is I think it shows that an attractive bonsai can be produced without much effort using inexpensive juniper nursery stock.



Jason Chan with an inexpensive juniper (above). From a less-than-promising nursery stock (right), Jason created an interesting twin-trunk bonsai (left).

Ryan Neil

Bonsai Mirai

Portland, Oregon

YouTube: Mastering Satsuki Azalea Bonsai Form: Pruning and Wiring Techniques May 2023

53 minutes

“Looking to learn about Satsuki azaleas and how to maximize their aesthetic quality beyond just their flowering cycle?” Ryan asks in the notes for this nearly hour-long video. “In this informative stream, we dive into the often-overlooked topic of design and pruning techniques for Satsuki azaleas during non-flowering seasons. You’ll discover the nuanced repotting needs and behavior of these stunning trees and learn how to use wiring practices to shape and elevate them as bonsai subjects. With our expert guidance, you’ll build your skills and take your Satsuki azalea gardening to the next level.”

In the video, Ryan talks about the many differences between pruning Satsuki azaleas and other broadleaf trees. He continually talks as he works on this tree. What he says is interesting.

Note the words “during non-flowering seasons.” I at one time attempted Satsuki azalea bonsai until I discovered they didn’t like our Southern California hard water and they should not be allowed to flower every year so as to maintain their vigor. With rainwater or reverse osmosis water, Satsuki azalea bonsai may be a reasonable choice for our area. 🌳

After trimming and wiring (right). Ryan said this tree will never be a show winner. There’s a large hole in the back of the trunk plus other imperfections. It is a good tree, however, to work on to increase skills. It will wind up a nice tree.



All screen captures by Ken Martin

Semi-Cascade Trident Maple in Spring Foliage

Editor's Note: This Conejo Valley Bonsai Society editor provided the niche display at CVBS's April 2023 meeting. I showed this semi-cascade trident maple. Here are some details.

Originally the apex of a 24-inch tall tree, this small semi-cascade trident maple was air layered beginning in the spring of 2017. I removed it from the mother tree in March 2018. It has been in this pot for several years and a few roots just now are beginning to show through the bottom drainage hole. I plan to pull it out of this pot next potting season, work on the roots, and probably return it to this pot unless I find a better one for it.

It originally was a nice top for the mother tree, but sat atop about 4 inches of broom-handle straight, leafless trunk, which was an ugly contrast with all the movement in the lower trunk. I eliminated that straight section of trunk and am developing a new apex using thread-grafting of a branch from the same tree.

—David Whiteside

David Whiteside's semi-cascade trident maple (below) was still in spring-foliage display condition when he displayed it at CVBS's April 2023 meeting. By mid- to late-summer, water and climate conditions in David's bonsai garden tend to dry out the leaves, which become unattractive with withered edges.



Photo by Damon DuBois

CVBS Bonsai Library at Your Service

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

Creating Bonsai Landscapes: 18 Miniature Garden Projects by Su Chin Ee (Storey Publishing, 2003).

Our Book of the Month for this issue is *Creating Bonsai Landscapes: 18 Miniature Garden Projects* by Su Chin Ee (published by Storey Publishing, 2003). I reviewed this book a couple of years ago and remain captivated by the landscapes created by the author and shown in this book.

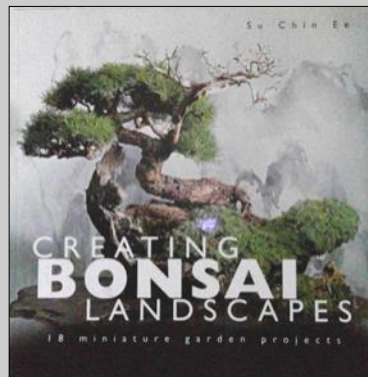
In the author’s Introduction, she admits that her work is controversial because it isn’t constrained by bonsai rules or penjing philosophy but instead combines both ancient art forms with topiary and other art to create landscapes that evoke an intriguing glimpse of an imaginary yet natural scene. I returned to this book recently for help creating a boxwood group planting over a large lava rock.

I wasn’t looking to re-create one of her landscapes but was looking for inspiration. I had a large and interesting piece of lava rock that was ripe to host a bonsai or penjing. I also picked up several young Kingsville boxwoods from our CVBS holiday party last December (thanks to a donation from Rick Naber). I wanted to pull these pieces together and create my own boxwood landscape but struggled to find the right vision for the project.

A picture of Su Chin’s “Metal and Stone” landscape (see the picture below) helped me pull it together. I adapted her step-by-step instructions and planted my boxwoods over the rock in a large wood crate. I plan to let them sink roots into the rock for a year or two, and then gradually reduce the soil level to reveal the trees and allow me to add more plants to lower portions of the rock.

I hope to unveil a cool landscape planting at a club meeting a few years from now—stay tuned! In the meantime, you can check out this book and make your own landscapes.

—Mike Blumenberg



The cover of this issue’s Book of the Month (above).

One of Su Chin Ee’s dramatic landscapes from the book *Creating Bonsai Landscapes* (left).

The Kingsville boxwood landscape Mike Blumenberg is creating (below).



Photos by Mike Blumenberg

Behind the Scenes Tour of the Huntington Bonsai Collection

By Marj Branson

On Saturday, April 22, 2023, a group of Conejo Valley Bonsai Society members were treated to a “back room” visit to the bonsai collection at The Huntington Library, Art Museum, and Botanical Gardens in San Marino, California.

The Huntington’s bonsai curator, Ted Matson, took us on a tour of the Ben Oki Nursery, a growing and work area named for the late former curator. This is where they keep and care for bonsai that are not currently on display in the nearby Japanese garden. Some of the trees we saw are under development or long-term refinement, but many others are regularly rotated into public display areas.

Bonsai that are in flower or fruit are often moved into the display areas. Garden visitors always enjoy seeing these trees.

The nursery also contains some large bonsai that are too big for the regular display rotation. There are plans to move these into a special row of large bonsai where the public will be able to enjoy them.

During the last few years, Ted has brought many leading bonsai artists to the nursery to work on specific trees. The goal is to upgrade the bonsai collection.

Ted, visiting artists, and volunteers have been busy with significant re-styling of some trees. On

several large specimens, we observed significant bending of trunks and large branches.

The California juniper collection, in particular, has been worked on extensively. Ted pointed out significant work that had been done on several—specially to restore and protect large amounts of deadwood.

In the bonsai nursery area, we found a number of huge forest bonsai.

Next to the Ben Oki Nursery, we also saw a major new feature under development: a reconstructed 320-year-old house from Marugame, Japan. (Marugame is located in north-center Kagawa Prefecture, on the island of Shikoku, the smallest of the four main islands of Japan.)

Originally a magistrate’s (shoya) home, it is now known as the Japanese Heritage Shoya House. It is a 3,000-square-foot residence built around 1700 and served as the center of village life, according to a Huntington news release.

We were able to view only the outside of the complex that the Huntington is developing around the Shoya House because it has not opened yet. Once finished, it will show village life of the time. It is slated to be completed later this year. It will be a stunning new feature at the Huntington.

If you would like to help work on the bonsai collection at the Huntington, please let us know and we will get you the information. All volunteers are welcome, no matter what level they are with bonsai. 🌲



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cant re-
styling of
some
trees. On

Huntington bonsai curator Ted Matson explaining the work being done on this large California juniper (left).

One of the California junipers with massive deadwood (below).

The CVBS tour at the entrance to the Ben Oki Nursery (below left).

Outside the Japanese Heritage Shoya House (below right).

Photos by Damon DuBois



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

May

May 6, 2023 Gardena, California

Dai Ichi Bonsai Kai's 36th Annual Bonsai Exhibit & Sale at 1670 West 162nd St, Gardena, CA 90247. Join us for our 36th Annual Bonsai Exhibit & Sale. Novice to master exhibitors, daily demonstrations and drawings, bonsai plants, tools and accessories on sale throughout the show. Free admission and parking.

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 workshops both mornings from 9:00 AM – Noon. Enrollment is limited. Ryan's 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. [For more information, see article, page 1.] 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 Event

CVBS's 2nd Saturday Outdoor Workshop

By Mike Blumenberg

On Saturday, May 6th, a few Conejo Valley Bonsai Society members met for a workshop at the Ventura County Nursery. CVBS member Rick Boyer works at the nursery and hosted this workshop. This was the second CVBS workshop at the nursery.

Most of the attendees worked on spring clean-up of bonsai and pre-bonsai that had grown a bit wild this spring.

Rick tamed a trident maple and found a wind-swept bonsai within a healthy and overgrown juniper. Antonio Viscarra worked with Marj Branson to clean up a



Rick Boyer (left) 'taming' his trident maple.

Antonio Viscarra (in the back, in photo, right) working on his foemina juniper. Mike Blumenberg (middle in photo, right) cleaning up one of his trees. And Rick Boyer (foreground, right) with his trident maple.

foemina juniper bonsai while Marj replanted a foemina forest that unfortunately lost one of its trees last summer. She pulled the dead tree and another to keep an odd numbered forest, and then refreshed the old soil. The new forest looked great! I cleaned up an overgrown Chinese elm and hackberry.

The weather was perfect for our outdoor workshop and the Nursery was an inspiring location with a wide variety of trees and shrubs bursting with spring growth. It was a small but productive group, and we enjoyed our afternoon working and discussing bonsai. Let's do it again! 🌳

Photos by Marj Branson

